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DRAGON

A Dungeons & Dragons Roleplaying Game Supplement

Editorial: Darwin's Finches

By Steve Winter

Illustration by William O'Connor

You'd think there'd be no chance to work on a Dragon editorial at a place as jumpin' as PAX Prime, but in this particular instance, you'd be wrong.

A busy convention hallway is not a productive place to write—there's usually too much noise and always too many distractions (especially if the only place to sit is a spot on the floor where people continually step over you). It can be the ideal place, too, because you're surrounded by what make this hobby worthwhile--happy gamers who are excited about playing D&D with countless other fans and friends.

We don't like to admit it, but residing inside Fortress WotC isolates us from you, the people we're working for and trying to please. Meeting fans face to face and joining their games at conventions or Dungeons & Dragons® Encounters sessions is invaluable, because it shows us what happens when D&D meets the real world.

I tend to picture individual gaming groups as the Galapagos Islands, and the D&D rules as Darwin's finches. At one time, all of those finches were the same species. Isolated on their individual islands, each group evolved in different directions in response

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to local conditions. By the time Darwin found them, they had become many distinct yet clearly similar species. In the same way, diverse gaming groups, all starting with the same set of D&D rulebooks, can wind up playing versions of the game that are similar yet clearly different.

In that regard, we're no different from anyone else. D&D campaigns played by R&D staff run the gamut from by-the-books purity to widely divergent and experimental. Like you, we develop idiosyncratic house rules and peculiar forms of shorthand.

When we get a chance to see "real people" playing D&D or, better yet, sit in on your games as players, we gain a perspective that can't be had any other way. We're reminded what it's like when everyone in the group doesn't have access to the complete D&D library or to endless supplies of miniatures and Dungeon Tiles. We're reminded that the rules can be hard to remember and the manuals confusing to navigate if you're not steeped in them for 40+ hours a week. We're reminded that people play Dungeons & Dragons for diverse reasons and draw diverse rewards from the experience. Maybe most of all, we're reminded of how liberating it is when your play isn't dominated by game-design questions such as whether a rule is doing exactly what it should; whether a race is missing something that would add to the experience; or whether a class has some "design space" for an interesting *Dragon* online article. Those concerns can distract us from what really matters, which is that people play D&D because they want to sit around a table with like-minded friends and let their imaginations soar into realms of fantastic wonder, terrifying danger, and heroic deeds.

The fact that Dungeons & Dragons can mutate this way is one of its great appeals and one of the reasons why it has endured for more than thirty years. How has your game evolved away from the main trunk of Dungeons & Dragons rules to match your group's preferences? How often have you plugged in a quick ruling for something that was unclear, and that ruling became the accepted way of doing things? Have you ever switched groups permanently or temporarily and wondered whether you were still playing the same game? Share your experiences in the comments below, in the forum, or email them to dndinsider@wizards.com.

Class Acts—Warlock: Strange Constellations

By Bruce R. Cordell

Illustration by William O'Connor

In June, we presented rules updates to the warlock in the form of a playtest article. After receiving feedback from the playtest, we made some changes and posted the final updates. One piece of consistent playtest feedback was the need for more star pact warlock powers that rely on Constitution at certain levels. To that effect, we went to warlock-and-tentacled-horror expert Bruce Cordell and asked him if he'd write an article responding to the desires of the fan community. This is what he wrote. Read at your own peril!

Introduction

Pact-swearing warlocks live dangerously, but not through choice. They can't help having this personality trait. It takes a certain reckless craziness to pledge oneself to an entity that is amoral, diabolical, uncaring, or, worse yet, utterly indifferent to reality except for its potential use as a chew toy.

Bizarre patterns in the sky are visible to those in the right place, in the right time, or in the right frame of mind. That's when warlocks seize the power bequeathed from the pitiless points of light that shine unchanging beyond night's void—points of light that, in sum, form strange constellations.

Star Pact

Some stars are said to provide good luck; to see them wink from heaven's vault is considered a blessing. Other stars are associated with benign omens and powers of beauty, healing, and clarity of thought. Quite a few serve as beacons for navigation.

But other stars are stranger, such as the stars used by alien creatures as illumination to peer into our reality. These entities are lumped together and described as residents of the Far Realm. Labeling them as such is a reasonable first organizing principle, and it's the safest too. Attempting to gain deeper clarity on the true nature of such stars can bring researchers an unhappy fate. When it comes to alien horrors, truisms about "the more you know" being an advantage crumble to dust.

Despite the dangers, the mad, the passionate, and the nihilistic continue to seek greater understanding of the very thing that tears asunder the minds of most inquisitors. Through trial and error, these people named new entities, guessed their natures, and teased out new spells for those whose pact is with the stars. These warlocks, sages, and scholars consolidated the bulk of that knowledge in a wizard's tower, where they constantly researched more lore.

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Then rumors told of a horrifying new constellation that would rise in the east and that would bring in a terrible new age (according to some prophecies). To prevent this prophecy from being fulfilled, some enterprising people caused the tower and all its contents to burn to the ground one night during a spectacular meteor shower. None of those who originally pieced together the information survived. All that remains regarding the nature of the enigmatic star pattern that failed to appear, including many of the constituent stars, is embedded in the crystal headpiece of a warlock's rod. The embedded message (a sort of psychic engram) is called the *Confession of Melech*.

CONFESSION OF MELECH

The *Confession of Melech* is recorded as a psychic impression inside a fist-sized chunk of purple crystal set as the capstone of a rod. The rod acts like a *rod of wrathful dismissal*.

The names and natures of terrifying new entities associated with the Elder Constellation becomes known to those who sleep or meditate with the crystal in their possession for at least one hour.

Stars of the Elder Constellation

When time draws to its inevitable close, most of the stars visible in the sky will have burned out. Only a scattered few will flicker with fossil light, peering and presiding over the end of everything.

Besides previously named stars whose properties have been partially described (including Caiphon, Allabar, Nihal, and Zhudun), several other stars also survive (or perhaps appear) at the end of time: the stars of the Elder Constellation. Despite the fact that the constellation shouldn't be visible for eons beyond count, visions of it have seared themselves into the minds of those unlucky enough to dream too close to weak spots in reality. Those who wake from such dreams prophesy an early end to the cosmos that is heralded by the appearance of the Elder Constellation millennia too soon. These prophets then die an early death or undergo a slow transformation into a humanoid abomination.

Those who can imagine the Elder Constellation without perishing or becoming an alien in their own skin can also call upon the spells resident in each of the primary stars of the pattern. The names include the following: Atropus, Father Llymic, Pandorym, Ragnorra, and the Worm That Walks.

Atropus

Atropus, the World Born Dead, drifts through the gulfs of space, searching for worlds to consume. When it finds a world, it erases all life from it with a single gruesome touch. As the afterbirth of creation, this entity is committed to unmaking all things. Nothing, not even the gods, can halt the relentless progress of Atropus.

Father Llymic

A mote of alien thought given form and flesh, Father Llymic dwells in an icy prison, awaiting a time when the world will be right for his arrival. As his age of freezing darkness draws near, his brood begins to appear, stalking the wastes in preparation for his reign. If he is released from his prison, he will cover the entire world with a deadly glacier and remove the world from light and hope for all time.

Pandorym

Pandorym personifies the emotionless void of utter annihilation. Though imprisoned millennia ago, a future era will see its release. The god-slaying weapon awaits the arrival of a being powerful enough to reunite its awesome mind with its potent

ELDER EVILS

The names of the stars making up the Elder Constellation first appeared in *Elder Evils*™, a D&D® game supplement outlined by Bruce Cordell and written by Rob Schwalb. Pandorym appeared before that in the Forgotten Realms® novel *Darkvision* (2006).

Thus the entities of the Elder Constellation are not all associated with the Far Realm as some previous warlock star pact entities have been; however, the names noted here are of inconceivably powerful beings who survive to time's end. In that final gathering of monstrosities, it becomes difficult to distinguish which entities were native to the Material Plane and which came from some place farther. Ultimately, they're all creatures of such insane power that they disrupt the flow of time in their final apotheoses.

body. Pandorym seeks freedom, and thereafter it intends to bring about the extinction of every god in the cosmos.

Ragnorra

Ragnorra, Mother of Monsters, is a primeval source of corrupted life. Bloated, hideous, and filled with a terrible love for her children, this entity waits at the end of time to gather all her fell offspring back to her awful bosom.

The Worm That Walks

The Worm is a sentient tear in reality through which one can see a swarming mass of maggots and worms that goes on forever. The light from this star is green, and it writhes eternally. Nihal is brother to the Worm, or rather, they are aspects of the same entity as seen from different ends of time.

New Warlock Powers

A warlock of the appropriate level can choose from the following new powers. The powers are tailored for star pact warlocks who favor Constitution over Charisma.

Level 1 Encounter Power

Pandorym's Cry — Warlock Attack 1

From a distance too far to measure, you evoke an echo of Pandorym's birthing cry: a sound of madness incarnate.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + Constitution modifier psychic damage.
Star Pact: The target also grants combat advantage and is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Level 3 Encounter Power

Worms — Warlock Attack 3

For a moment, your foe is covered in biting, swarming, and crushing maggots that make up the infinite extradimensional body of the Worm That Walks.

Encounter ✦ Acid, Arcane, Healing, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + Constitution modifier acid damage, and you regain 3 hit points.
Star Pact: Add your Intelligence modifier to the hit points regained.

Level 7 Encounter Powers

Elder Constellation — Warlock Attack 7

A maddening pattern appears in the air, revealing a few flickering stars that preside over the end of everything. Space wavers, and your foes are caught up in the instability.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Cold, Implement, Teleportation
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One or two creatures
Attack: Constitution vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + Constitution modifier cold damage.
Star Pact: The target also grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.
Effect: If you hit both targets, you can teleport them, swapping their positions.

Maggot Conduit — Warlock Attack 7

Holes devoured through space-time crawl with the green-white maggots of the Worm. You invoke a conduit, which manifests as a writhing pit of maggots beneath your foes.

Encounter ✦ Acid, Arcane, Implement, Zone
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each creature in the burst
Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + Constitution modifier acid damage.
Star Pact: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Any creature that enters the zone or ends its turn there takes acid damage equal to 1 + your Intelligence modifier (a creature can take this damage only once per turn).

Level 13 Encounter Power

Maw of Atropus — Warlock Attack 13

The World Born Dead consumes anything that it can reach. Your spell manifests a slavering maw of Atropus, which attempts to eat your foes.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Necrotic
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d12 + Constitution modifier necrotic damage.
Star Pact: The target also takes a penalty to Fortitude until the end of your next turn. The penalty equals your Intelligence modifier.

Level 17 Encounter Power

Llymic's Frigid Prison — Warlock Attack 17

A puff of icy air escapes from Father Llymic's icy prison, foreshadowing when glaciers will cover all the worlds and remaining life will serve to feed the Father's brood.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Cold, Healing, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Constitution modifier cold damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.
Star Pact: You also regain hit points equal to twice your Intelligence modifier.

Level 19 Daily Power

Malicious Guide Star — Warlock Attack 19

An apocalyptic starscape waits for the world's end. That inevitable end draws a little closer each time you conjure a malicious spark to guide your foes to ruination.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Aura, Implement, Radiant, Teleportation
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d10 + Constitution modifier radiant damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: You activate an aura 1 on the target. The aura lasts until the end of your next turn, and the target cannot deactivate it. The target and any of your enemies grant combat advantage while in the aura. In addition, you can teleport the target or another creature in the aura up to 5 squares as a move action.
Sustain Minor: The aura persists until the end of your next turn.

Level 23 Encounter Power

Pandorym's Prism — Warlock Attack 23

A purple crystal intrudes on reality, shining with fell light and turning the one who looks upon it into a dull receptacle for your will.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Charm, Implement, Psychic, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + Constitution modifier psychic and radiant damage, and the target makes a basic attack as a free action against a creature of your choice.
Star Pact: The target also takes a penalty to Will until the end of your next turn. The penalty equals your Intelligence modifier.

Level 27 Encounter Power

Grasp of Ragnorra — Warlock Attack 27

Ragnorra misses her brood and ecstatically reaches into the world to claim substitutes and visit upon them the terrible love she has for her true children.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Necrotic, Thunder
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Constitution modifier necrotic and thunder damage, and the target is removed from play until the end of your next turn. It then reappears in its original space or in the nearest unoccupied space if that space is occupied.
Star Pact: You decide where the target reappears, choosing an unoccupied space within 20 squares of you.

About the Author
Bruce enjoys reading good books, eating good sushi, and trying new things—at least if they're not too new. He has also been known to write things, most recently the new *D&D Gamma World™ Roleplaying Game*, as well as his latest novel, *Sword of the Gods*. You can find out more about Bruce at www.brucercordell.com.

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Academies of Magic

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Everyone who aspires to the life of an adventurer has a special attraction to some type of heroic career. Some are of a martial bent, finding their niche in the prowess that they bring to weaponry and feats of strength. Others gravitate to the path of the divine, relying on and furthering the causes of the deities they revere.

Still others cannot resist the pull of arcane power—in their minds the purest and most potent of all forms of magic.

One does not become a wizard by simply wanting to be, any more than one can pick up a sword and call oneself a warrior. Desire is for naught without education and training. Fortunately for any would-be spellcaster, the world includes a number of institutions of arcane study that exist for the purpose of passing on their knowledge to a new generation.

This article presents five academies of magic for arcane adventurers. Although the focus here is on wizards, many of the options presented are also available to arcane classes such as the swordmage, warlock, and artificer. As a player, consider the entry on your character's academy as a window into his or her formative years. Feel free to fill in whatever gaps you like: Adding details about professors, fellow students, friends and rivals, significant events, and other

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information can help you develop your character's personality and background.

Not only are these academies useful to players for character building, they are also fertile ground for the Dungeon Master to create adventures. If one or more of your players opts into these academies, you can tie their background elements to plots that incorporate these peculiar institutions in your campaign. If none of your players take advantage of the options included here, you will still find plenty of adventure hooks that you can use in your campaign. For example, the PCs might become embroiled in a war between Shadowdeep and the White Spires. They could be summoned to Rumor to solve a murder that took place in a room not only locked but impossible to find, or they might be called upon to help defend Ironstone from an incursion of giants.

Callanar, the White Spires

I count myself lucky to have been born when I was. The White Spires reveal themselves to my world only once each decade, and had I not been of age when the mists surrounding Faerie parted, I might never have escaped my father's farm. A whole new realm opened for me the moment I took the first step onto the alabaster stairs, and though I have left my friends and family behind, I have no regrets. I have only a desire to prove myself worthy of the honor bestowed on me by the masters who welcomed me into their ranks.

Most magical institutions in the natural world offer opportunities to study enchantment magic. Many spells associated with this school have made their way into the spellbooks of wizards, regardless of where those wizards studied or what interests they pursue. But the finest institutions that teach the mysteries of enchantment stand in the Feywild. It was in this bright plane that the school of charms and compulsions took shape. Callanar, also known as the White Spires, commands respect even from other fey academies. If legend can be believed, Corellon himself gave magic to the worlds on the misty isle where Callanar's twisting white towers climb.

Callanar's lofty reputation comes from its most valued assets: the lore contained within its towers and the brilliance of its faculty. The academy's remoteness and its infrequent admission of new students add to its mystique, so that Callanar has become more marvelous in the perception of many than it is in reality. Callanar accepts new students during only one month every decade, when the academy drifts out of the Feywild and appears on a tiny, fog-shrouded island in a remote corner of the natural world. For as long as the academy remains in the world, its doors are open to any candidates who approach and enter the place. At the end of the month, Callanar fades away, drawn back to its home plane for another ten years.

Callanar comprises eight gleaming white towers, each linked to others at various points and at different heights by bridges. A thick evergreen forest grows around the towers, casting deep shadows on the surrounding grounds and their weaving pathways. A high wall, made from the same white stone as the towers, encircles the place. The school's guardians, representing a wide variety of races and cultures, patrol its battlements. These guardians demonstrate unwavering loyalty to the wizards who rule Callanar, and there are rumors among the students that the guardians are ensorcelled.

In the Feywild, the academy's influence extends beyond its walls. A single path leads out from the gate through a tangled wood. Enchanted creatures prowl the forest's shadows, from playful satyrs to monstrous owlbears. All creatures here exhibit the capriciousness found in those who live in the Bright Lands. Even those that normally exhibit violent or mischievous behavior never harm or trouble the faculty or the students of Callanar without provocation.

History

The Feywild was a much different place when the elves first raised Callanar's white towers. Corellon had just released arcane magic into the planes; elves were a single, unified people; and Lolth had not yet begun her descent into the madness that would culminate in the Sundering, which haunts the elven races still. The elves knew they had been entrusted with a wondrous gift in magic, but they also saw the danger posed by its spread. Eight wizards who had dedicated themselves to studying arcane energy raised eight towers on the spot where Corellon had bestowed magic on his people. The wizards used the towers for learning and experimentation, advancing their understanding of magic and passing on their discoveries to those who followed. Some of the most famous spells known to wizards owe their existence to the pioneers who did their best work here.

When war broke out among the elves, precipitated by Lolth's betrayal and the widespread corruption of her followers, Callanar's wizards initially held themselves apart from the struggle—even though individually they were as divided as their kin beyond the walls, as a group they cared more for the continued safety of the academy. So, in an attempt to remain neutral in the conflict, the wizards of Callanar began to perform a ritual to shift the White Spires from the Feywild into the natural world until the war ended.

However, during the casting of the ritual, drow loyalists in the group turned against their fellows and slew them before the ritual could take full effect. The White Spires moved into the natural world anyway, much to the chagrin of the dark elf insurrectionists, and the magic was strong enough to hold it there until the waning days of the conflict.

Soon after Callanar returned to its birthplace, Corellon defeated Lolth and flung her down to the Abyss. The dark elves and their servants fled to the Underdark to escape the Shining Lord's wrath, and the whole of the Feywild began to heal the wounds

wrought by destructive magic. The drow loyalists that occupied Callanar abandoned the towers to join their kin in the Underdark, leaving the White Spires free to begin anew. Since then, Callanar has slowly rebuilt its faculty and its reputation, and the White Spires have reclaimed their place as a preeminent institution for delving into arcane magic's deeper mysteries.

Admission

Few students of magic in the natural world have a chance to study at Callanar. The institution is out of their reach except during the brief time every ten years when it appears. Even fey peoples living in the Feywild face numerous challenges to reach the academy: Strange monsters and hazardous plants make the journey to the place perilous. When a potential student gains entry to the White Spires, he or she must show evidence of some magical talent or ability. If they cannot, they are cast out and left with no memory of ever having been inside its halls. As a result, eladrin and members of other races with magical abilities are heavily represented in the student body, outnumbering those of more natural origin.

Faculty

Ever since the school's founding, eight archmages have used Callanar for research and study. They teach only during the infrequent breaks in their work. For this reason, students progress at a slow pace, some spending as many as three years to learn their first cantrip. Each professor pursues a different strain of arcane magic. As tradition dictates, the ranking archmage acts as headmaster and determines the academy's broader curriculum.

Lady Ezanella took the post of headmistress two hundred years ago, after her predecessor vanished. A striking eladrin, she moves with ethereal grace through the towers, often with a train of smitten students trailing after her. Most suppose that this devotion has its origin in the enchantment spells Ezanella weaves; no one at the academy can match her talent for charms.

The other seven wizards are among the best in their fields. Mayaza, an eladrin seer, is Callanar's authority on ritual magic, particularly divinations. Coren, a half-elf evoker, instructs students on the finer points of battle magic, and Beirel, on loan from Rumor (page $), teaches illusions. Galek Crep is the institution's artificer, Nevazra handles conjurations, and Poril Feen trains students in the fighting arts; he has produced several successful swordmages over the years.

Curriculum

Although Callanar provides training for a wide range of magical interests, enchantment has been its focus since Lady Ezanella took control. Her incomparable talent with enchantment spells cows the other faculty members. Ezanella now requires any wizard in training to master at least one enchantment spell before he or she is recognized as a full wizard. The result is that the institution recently has produced many accomplished enchanters and far fewer wizards who excel in other areas.

Callanar lacks a structured curriculum. Students pick up what training they can from professors who, though they are incredibly intelligent, consider teaching a secondary or even a tertiary pursuit. A student has to master a few cantrips to get an instructor's personal attention, and even then the student is expected to find his or her own answers to questions by researching the repository of tomes and manuals in the vaults under the towers. Only the most disciplined and dedicated students complete their training. Those who lag behind or become frustrated are free to leave at any time, though they must get along without the academy's protection against the monsters that live beyond Callanar's walls.

Goals

Callanar has never concealed its true intent or wavered from its ultimate objective. The wizards and others who work and teach here seek knowledge of and mastery over arcane magic. Furthermore, the White Spires wants nothing to do with politics; those living within its walls are expected to set aside their old allegiances. Callanar is a research facility first and foremost and an educational center secondarily. Thus, professors often send out students on expeditions to hunt down special ingredients, follow leads on lost magic items, or leave them to their own devices for weeks at a time.

Secrets

Whispers about Lady Ezanella have circulated ever since she came to power. Speculation about Ezanella's involvement in her predecessor's disappearance dogged her for a time, but has recently been supplanted by a new rumor. A student claimed to have seen her transform from an eladrin into a drow. Not long after he began circulating the story, his peers found his broken body at the base of one of the towers. If the student's tale is true, it could be, as some have speculated, that Ezanella is one of the institution's founders—one of the dark elves who betrayed the other original wizards.

In the World

The academy maintains frosty relations with other institutions of similar sort; this distance stems mainly from Callanar's seclusion and exclusivity. Only Rumor (page xx) seems to have established an alliance with Callanar, cemented when the White Spires accepted Beirel as a member of the staff. The other academies have little use for the eladrin and regard them as aloof, arrogant, and secretive. Some even suspect the institution of hiding some dark and terrible secret.

In the natural world, a small village has grown up near the lake where Callanar appears. Hopeful students are welcome to wait here for the White Spires to return, and wizards have set up shop in the village, offering instruction to help them prepare for the rigorous testing required for entry. Hedge wizards and alchemists putter about in the tiny shops and houses that line the tangled streets, offering lectures and instruction to any who can afford their fees. The village is also a valuable source of information: Callanar uses it to monitor developments in the natural world, and many professors travel here from time to time to get supplies and news.

BACKGROUND: STUDENT OF CALLANAR

You spent ten years studying at the White Spires of Callanar where you learned to perform magic, uncovered arcane lore, and learned of the ancient traditions going back to the dawn of all worlds. You might have chosen to deepen your understanding of the arcane as much as possible, or you might have seen the sensibility of being versatile—refining your social skills for times when charm magic doesn't help you, or adding to your storehouse of knowledge about the past.

Associated Skills: Arcana, Bluff, History
Associated Languages: Elven

Ironstone Academy

What did I learn at Ironstone? I learned how dangerous magic can be. I learned that magic and chaos are one and the same, and without a firm hand—without training, discipline, and talent—magic can destroy you. I learned to master it, to bend it to my will, and compel it to obey my every command.

For many academies, learning, education, and training define their purpose. Some institutions have other agendas. Ironstone Academy, for example, has no interest in fostering its students' intellectual capabilities or expanding their horizons. Ironstone exists only to create warmages, turning apprentices into magical warriors who wield the forces of creation in defense of humanity's last holdings. The academy teaches order, duty, and discipline. Nothing more, nothing less.

Ironstone's focus on military preparation makes the school's remote location all the more appropriate. The institution rises from a mountaintop, its high towers piercing the clouds. Curtain walls stretch between rocky outcrops at various points down the mountainside, to ensure that attacking enemies pay dearly as they make their ascent. The academy occupies several buildings huddled behind the fortifications, and it extends deep into the mountain through ancient tunnels that lead to vaulted chambers and sprawling galleries where one can see evidence of dwarven craftsmanship.

The routes up the mountainside are daunting and dangerous. Herders and other travelers crowd the lower slopes, so travelers must often stop to wait for oxen to amble past, or for a merchant train to maneuver into a clearing so faster climbers can pass. All the way up the mountainside, one finds hamlets where dwarves and humans live and work together, fighting against the elements to grow crops and tend livestock. These settlements are, according to the graybeards, as old as the fortress above; the people who live there now are the descendants of those who once swore fealty to the dwarf kings of old.

The higher one climbs, the fewer the travelers become. During this final ascent, many petitioners give up and turn back: The air is too thin, the going too hard. The occasional burial marker shows where a stumble carried a traveler to his or her death, while old skulls stare out from crevices built into the low wall that follows the path up to the first curtain wall.

Anyone who makes it to the first wall finds the rest of the journey easier. A way station here provides warmth, shelter, and food for potential students. Its guardians escort the travelers to mechanical lifts that carry them up through the next half-dozen walls, until they reach the academy at the top.

New students soon find that the austere community provides few comforts beyond a bunk in a drafty barracks and an unpleasant repast prepared by the first- and second-year students. Ironstone Academy offers a difficult and challenging life, but that's exactly what its founders wanted. Anything else would be a disservice to those who will one day fight on the front lines against civilization's foes.

History

Long before wizards claimed the abandoned mountain fortress, dwarf clans called it home. The castle at the top housed an ancient and storied line of dwarf kings. Under their rule, their people raised a great city that extended down and throughout the mountain, with many tunnels and chambers that remain unexplored by the magicians who live here now. The dwarves found gold, gems, and other treasure in the depths, and they grew rich from the valuables they coaxed from the unyielding rock.

The dwarves' work attracted attention from the giant tribes who dwelled on the neighboring peaks, and eventually the mountain giants stirred from their fastnesses to hurl boulders against the dwarves'

sturdy walls. Orcs, slaves to the giants, boiled up from the deep tunnels to harry the miners and test their defenses. Although the dwarves were able to throw back their foes time and again, the doughty defenders slowly gave ground to their enemies, retreating farther and farther until they ceded their holdings altogether, bitterly vowing that they would one day return.

An age later, during humanity's rise to power, a mighty nation was beset by armies of savage humanoids. The king commanded his battle mages to found an institution that would train warmages to help defend against the growing threat. The wizards knew they lacked time to raise a defensible structure, so they sought out an existing stronghold they could repair and fortify. The old dwarven fortress in the high mountains provided an ideal site, offering both natural and manufactured obstacles to frustrate the rampaging humanoids, It took little work to clear out the debased orcs squatting in the tunnels: Within two years, the wizards had secured the site and begun recruiting students.

Ironstone prospered for a time, even though the institution had to contend with many of the same challenges the dwarves faced. The academy's defenders fought giants, rooted out orcs, and cut down the occasional horrors that stumbled up from the Underdark. Then, their darkest hour came when a former student named Radicus, who had been expelled for experimenting with necromancy, returned at the head of an undead army. Hordes of walking dead flowed up the mountainside and assailed Ironstone's walls. The fighting claimed the school's headmaster and nearly half of the students, but Ironstone proved it deserved its name by holding fast against the enemy host. The necromancer was driven off and his army destroyed, but twenty years later the memories of that struggle still haunt the academy. The skulls that line the path up the mountain offer mute testimony to that war's horrors.

Admission

Even though the last human empire lies in ashes and ruin, the war wizards of Ironstone Academy continue the work for which the place was founded. The institution's policy is never to turn away any candidate who makes the ascent. Surviving the climb is considered a sufficient enough achievement to earn some training in the magical arts. Those who lack the talent to master the arcane arts can still benefit by studying under the soldiers protecting the walls—themselves former applicants who for one reason or other didn't have what it took to become a wizard.

Since the collapse of the last human empire, Ironstone Academy has taken a direct hand in recruiting warmages. Wizards descend from the mountain and scour the countryside for suitable candidates. If removing a child from a home would create a hardship, as is often the case on the frontier, the wizards compensate the family or invite the child's relatives to work as servants at the academy.

Faculty

Aram cor Nera has run Ironstone for twenty years despite the fact that he has only a passing familiarity with wizard magic. Unlike the other instructors, Aram did not study at Ironstone. He received his training at White Spires, where he became a swordmage after a halfhearted effort to become a wizard. Aram traveled to Ironstone to offer his services as a warrior. He so distinguished himself in the battle against the necromancer Radicus and the undead hordes that the instructors named him headmaster, replacing his predecessor who died in the fighting.

Aram oversees the first- and second-year students, teaching them the cantrips that serve as the foundation of their training. He then hands them off to the other instructors for advanced lessons. The academy employs four wizards, each of whom has a staff of six spellcasters from varying traditions to help identify and foster a student's particular talents. The main instructors include Veran Moonblade, a stern eladrin evoker who has spent a human lifetime battling drow in the Underdark; Master Cypar, an ancient wizard who masks his shrewd cunning and incredible talent behind the facade of a doddering old man; Ewen Mackelson, an alumnus who seems to delight in terrorizing the students while teaching wards and other defenses; and Fath Umber, the academy's foremost authority on scrying and travel rituals.

Curriculum

Ironstone Academy students undergo extensive training in battle magic. Although most instructors favor the school of evocation, they do not disregard the combat applications of spells from other schools, particularly enchantment and illusion. The only school of magic the instructors do not tolerate is necromancy. Never a popular course of study to begin with, the headmaster banned it after the war with the undead.

Students supplement their magical lessons with martial training. Several accomplished swordmasters teach them how to carry armor, the proper way to hold a sword, and how to avoid getting killed in battle. Most learn just the fundamentals, but a few gifted students succeed in developing superior combat techniques.

Goals

Although the nation that Ironstone was founded to protect no longer exists, the school resolutely continues to prepare wizards and students of other arcane traditions for war. New threats rise each season to imperil towns and cities across the lowlands. The headmaster and the faculty hope that students trained at Ironstone will go forth and lend aid to the troubled lands.

At the same time, none of the people who work and teach here have forgotten the old kingdom. Many

cling to the hope that it might rise again, reclaiming its place as civilization's shining star and finding a way to push back against the wickedness pressing in from all sides. Instructors often recall the old kingdom in their lessons, using its favored spells and fighting techniques to illustrate the finer points of military training. Many students adopt their professors' loyalties and gather into cliques named after the realm's most famous wizards, fighting companies, and rulers.

Gossip

Ironstone Academy's faculty and armed guards ensure the safety of those within its walls. Even with the dangers of untrained magic flaring up in classrooms and the near constant drilling with arms, the institution goes to great lengths to ensure that students emerge with their health and all of their extremities intact. Unfortunately for a few, their best efforts are not enough.

Every year since the institution's founding, one student has gone missing. Locked doors, draconian curfews, rules that require students to move in groups: No preventive measures have worked. One student always disappears, with no notice beforehand and with no indication of where he or she went or what happened. Some believe that a creature from the Underdark preys on these unfortunate classmates, crawling up from the fetid darkness to snatch a student and drag him or her into the depths.

In the first few years of his leadership, Aram tried to solve this mystery by sending teams of warriors and wizards to explore the deep passages and see if there is indeed a predator at large. Some of those explorers have returned with nothing to report; others have not returned at all. Just as other headmasters before him had done, Aram came to realize that it's smarter to save lives by not trying to find the creature, and as a result, no one has been sent on this sort of mission for several years now.

In the World

Few other magical academies have cause to interact with Ironstone. Too remote for casual visits and too militant for the broader-focused academies, Ironstone remains apart. Ironstone participates in exchange programs and competitions between rival institutions; its students always do well in the battle events, but tend to show a poor grasp of theory and history.

Headmaster Aram recently sent three messengers to the White Spires by way of a portal. Rumor has it that the headmaster is seeking assistance with the missing student problem. Others think the academy merely wants to exchange information and perhaps students with other schools to improve its curriculum.

BACKGROUND: STUDENT OF IRONSTONE

You spent your youth studying the arts of war and magic at Ironstone Academy. In addition to the arcane instruction that everyone receives, Ironstone offers plenty of ways for students to hone their bodies as well as their minds. You might have spent more time than most on physical training, whether to increase your raw strength or your staying power.

Associated Skills: Arcana, Athletics, Endurance
Associated Languages: Dwarven

Obsidian Tower

"Shadow magic is no more evil than any other school. An evocation spell can snuff out innocent lives. An unscrupulous wizard can use enchantment spells to defraud and exploit the unwary. A convincing illusion can cause unimaginable despair and suffering. It is not the spell that is evil, but the hand that casts it."

Shadow magic finds few adherents in most universities of magic. Not many institutions would risk the public outrage if it became known that students were learning to create monsters from solidified shadow and perform other grotesqueries associated with the dark arts. There is also the price to consider: To master shadow magic, one must cede a portion of one's soul. For these reasons, institutions dedicated to such studies almost always lie outside the bounds of the civilized world.

The Obsidian Tower is one such place. It was raised by fugitive shadow mages on a rocky outcropping that extends out over a vast permanent darkland in the Shadowfell. The tower rises high above the sorrounding poisoned landscape, standing ten stories tall with a base covering two acres. The tower can accommodate two hundred students, the faculty, and the support staff who attend to the cooking, cleaning, and general maintenance. Its exterior is indeed made of the glassy black stone from which the Obsidian Tower takes its name. Flickering runes of protection are embedded in the rock at intervals, potent wards against the encroaching influence of the nearby darkland.

Although the tower looks intimidating on the outside, the interior is warm and inviting. The Obsidian Tower prides itself on being a place where the best minds in magic can learn and master arcane and shadow power.

History

The Obsidian Tower shares a past with some of the most accomplished wizards to ever study shadow magic. The founders of the tower came together when they all became disciples of the great Evard, considered the father of nethermancy. As they improved their prowess in the arts of shadow, they found themselves unwelcome in the wizard circles they had previously inhabited.

Denounced as renegades, these wizards and a few other users of shadow magic fled to the Shadowfell, where they could advance their understanding without interference from those who did not understand them. At no point did they plan to turn their refuge into a magical academy, but that is what happened as word of their research spread across the Shadowfell. A trickle of hopeful apprentices soon became a flood of students who sought to learn from these masters.

Admission

Once the leaders of the Obsidian Tower embraced its new role as a magical university, they took pains to mitigate the dangers inherent in studying the dark arts. They also expanded the curriculum beyond nethermancy to provide students with a well-rounded education.

In addition to paying a nominal fee for tuition, prospective students must undergo extensive testing to ensure they are suitable for the institution and vice versa. A candidate must demonstrate sufficient intellectual rigor or strength of personality to be allowed to study here. Interviewers also assess each candidate's moral fiber to weed out those with evil motivations, lest the instructors inadvertently create a monster they will not be able to later contain.

Faculty

The Obsidian Tower employs fifty full-time instructors. When the school is at capacity, there's one professor for every four students. The academy has at least one instructor for each known school of magic. Most faculty members have extensive experience with ritual magic, and few institutions can rival the number and the variety of the rituals contained in the academy's library.

The tower is run by a council of six wizards, one representing each of the major schools of magic—enchantment, evocation, illusion, necromancy, nethermancy, and transmutation. This council attends to the institution's administrative needs, disciplines wayward students and professors, and oversees yearly testing to ascertain students' progress.

The Obsidian Tower's faculty represents a diverse body of races and cultures. However, most of those who work at the school are shadowborn, and those who are native to the natural world are in the minority. Of the fifty, two eladrin instructors and one gnome professor originally hailed from the Feywild; all three did their training at Callanar.

The council presides over an orderly community inside the Obsidian Tower. Scheming and treachery are almost unknown in the tower, and rivalries rarely progress beyond the stage of heated arguments.

To encourage cooperation and teamwork within the tower, students are divided into classes. These classes elect leaders each year to represent the students' interests and resolve disputes between students without having to involve the staff. Quarterly duels between class champions encourage students to ensure that their fellows keep up with their work and do well, because winning these competitions often means additional free time, special events, and recognition.

Curriculum

It takes seven years of dedicated study to graduate from the Obsidian Tower. The tower's shadowy history suggests that nethermancy would be the school's primary focus, but students can get a strong education

in any school of magic. Though nethermancy remains the most popular choice those who study here, that school of magic does not entirely overshadow the others.

During their first two years, students learn the fundamentals: how to read arcane texts, how to sense magic and identify its principal effects, and how all forms of magic work. This initial course of study eventually expands to cover innately magical creatures, such as shadow, fey, and elemental creatures, along with constructs. In addition to arcane theory, students are free to pursue whatever other interests they might have, and the tower's libraries are filled with a variety of lore to draw upon. Because the Shadowfell's dark nature can have a negative effect on people from other planes, the school keeps its students constantly challenged to help them stay focused on their work and prevent the darkness from polluting their thoughts.

Training begins in earnest in the third year, when the students who make it this far learn and master cantrips. At this point they must decide whether they will specialize their training and become mages, or diversify and become arcanists. Although they receive the same education as others at this stage, mages in training take time away from cantrips to focus on their chosen schools.

The final years spent at the Obsidian Tower are those that turn students into wizards. In the fourth year, students learn basic combat spells for self-defense. Fifth-year students gain their spellbooks, and either focus on combat magic or learn ritual magic. Finally, sixth- and seventh-year students complete their training by learning the most powerful spells available to them.

Goals

The Obsidian Tower's original purpose was to advance its founders' understanding of shadow power. This aim remains a central concern for faculty who are engaged in magical research; many of them make forays into the nearby darkland to study shadow's effect on the plane, and how arcane magic interacts with it. Sometimes they take sixth- and seventh-year students along on these expeditions.

Although shadow remains important to the tower, it has moved into the background somewhat in recent years as the institution has developed into a general center of learning. If a former student goes on to become a wondrous worker of magic and achieves greatness in the world, the tower has accomplished its goal.

Secrets

For a school that prides itself on providing a strong education in an atmosphere of cooperation, learning, and discipline, the Obsidian Tower has plenty of secrets. Not every professor has embraced the academy's culture over the years. A few have worked to undermine the school and return the tower to its original purpose: a refuge for those seeking to master shadow's power. Students whisper about how some professors seem a little strange, as if they were hiding something. Often such speculation results from a particular instructor's peculiarities and nothing more. Sometimes, however, the students are right.

The other trouble with the Obsidian Tower stems from the plane itself. The Shadowfell is bleak; everyone who visits it must contend with feelings of despair, hopelessness, and melancholy. Proximity to the darkland intensifies these feelings. The academy tries to counteract the plane's influence with the wards placed on the outside of the structure, and by keeping the students working and active, but from time to time a student gives in to despair and wanders off from the tower to vanish into the darkland. There are few things more horrible than to see a former friend stumbling about that bleak landscape, now an undead mockery of a life lost to the desolate realm.

In the World

The Obsidian Tower's location in the Shadowfell insulates it from most intrigues involving rival schools. However, planar distances tend to lose their meaning in the business of wizardry, and contact between the tower and other institutions occurs more frequently than the council would like. Most other academies regard the tower with a bit of jealousy, since no other institution matches it for organization and focus. Add to this the tower's shadowy reputation, and many skeptical observers regard the university as being too good to be true.

In the Shadowfell, the Obsidian Tower stands apart from the rest of the plane even as it draws upon the darkness. The institution serves as a bulwark against the evil that permeates the realm of shadow. Any undead or other monstrosities that approach the tower are destroyed or repelled by powers and rituals that keep the place safe for students and faculty alike. However, the council rarely intervenes in matters of wider scope, not wanting to get the school embroiled in the manifold troubles afflicting the plane.

BACKGROUND: TOWER GRADUATE

You learned magic at the Obsidian Tower. To supplement your main course of study, you chose one of three paths: Either delving into the tower's libraries of lore at every opportunity gave you a strong sense of how to learn from the past, or you specifically researched the undead to better combat them, or you decided to rely almost exclusively on your considerable spellcasting ability.

Associated Skills: Arcana, History, Religion

Rumor, the Hidden Academy

You're looking for the magical academy? Good luck, friend. It's here somewhere, though where is the question. We've lost it and can't quite remember where we put it.

One of the most successful institutions of magic stands in the midst of a sprawling metropolis, yet few people living there have any idea where it is. It sits on no road, lies at the end of no alley. Climbing a tower might give you a nice look at the skyline, but you will see no sign of this institution amid the tangled streets and crowded neighborhoods. Most people have given up trying to find it, and many go so far as to deny it's there at all. But it is there. It's right in front of everyone. They just can't see it.

Rumor, also known as the Hidden Academy, has stood within the city's walls for nearly three centuries. The reason people cannot locate the academy is that it isn't in just one place: It spreads out like a spiderweb across the city. Instead of being made up of traditional corridors and classrooms, dormitories, and dining halls, all gathered under a single roof, Rumor exists in many different places. Powerful illusions make a dormitory look like an old, haunted house, a classroom appear to be a rubbish heap, and so on. Distance between the facilities is not a problem. The various locations all have permanent portals that allow instant passage from one building to another.

Rumor's secretive nature allows the Hidden Academy to more or less do what it pleases while avoiding political and social entanglements. As long as the local population doubts the academy even exists, the wizards have the run of the city. From time to time some ordinary citizen stumbles across a sign of Rumor's existence. If tales start spreading, Rumor moves quickly to contain the problem, either by casting doubt on the tale-teller's reputation or by erasing everyone's memories of the incident.

History

It all began with a tavern bet. A little over three hundred years ago, a charismatic illusionist named Pog was arguing with his longtime companion Melphor about who was the better wizard. Few people stayed to watch the two wizards show off their talents—by the time the first demon was summoned, it was clearly time to leave. Finally, after much drinking and much expenditure of arcane energy, the tavern was more or less demolished and no winner had emerged.

Pog leaned across the table and offered a final wager to his rival. He claimed he could make the headquarters of the local wizards' guild disappear. Melphor, rather wobbly by this point, saw no possible way that Pog could accomplish this feat, so he asked what the stakes would be. Pog said if he could do it, Melphor would have to hand over his *staff of the magi*. If Pog couldn't do it, Melphor could have Pog's *orb of dragonkind*. Melphor saw this as a bet he could not refuse.

The two shook hands and stumbled out of the tavern's smoking interior, to stand in the street where they could see the guild's crooked tower rising above the rooftops. The few brave or foolhardy souls who remained as witnesses would later report what happened. Pog wiggled his fingers, spoke strange incantations, and plucked all manner of odd objects, herbs, and crystals from his pouches. Through it all, Melphor chuckled to himself, knowing it was all showmanship and Pog was in fact accomplishing nothing.

At the last moment, when Pog's shrill voice reached its loudest, he spun on his longtime friend and loosed a minor spell that left his rival blind. And thus did the guildhouse disappear—for Melphor, at least.

The next day, now sober and bearing his new *staff of the magi*, Pog marched into the headquarters and declared himself the new guildmaster. Any wizards who might have challenged him were cowed by the potent staff he carried. Pog, who had always been unimpressed with the tower's condition, had the structure torn down and tasked the guild members with constructing something new and better. And so, a year or two later, the former wizards' guild was gone, replaced by a magical labyrinth of portals and secret chambers hatched in Pog's imagination.

Admission

When work was completed on the new Hidden Academy, Pog announced to the city that anyone who could find the institution could study there for free. Pog believed it would take a cunning mind to find a way into the institution through the illusion and misdirection, and he was convinced that such a mind would improve the academy.

Today, only the lucky and the clever find Rumor. Hopeful apprentices come to the city from all across the lands to search for clues to the academy's location. As these would-be students turn over every stone and knock on almost every door, the locals just shake their heads and laugh, happy to take coin from them for food and lodging during their stay in the city. Once in a great while a determined apprentice comes across a worthwhile clue and finds his or her way into the academy. Many more give up and find some other method of learning magic.

Faculty

An ancient and wizened Pog still oversees the Hidden Academy, as he has done since he forcibly took it from the guild wizards centuries ago. Pog rarely leaves his chambers, the location of which only he knows, and most members of the faculty are surprised to find he's still alive when he deigns to make an appearance.

His advanced age has done nothing to squelch his mischievous nature, and he has been known to occasionally help or hinder apprentices who come to the city in search of his institution.

The academy employs roughly twenty full-time arcane spellcasters as faculty. The number changes all the time. Professors might go on sabbatical with little to no notice, vanishing one day and returning days, months, or years later. For this reason, there is a lot of redundancy among the faculty—when one of the academy's potions experts takes off to gather mistletoe from a remote locale, someone is left to carry on the instruction. Professors maintain separate offices and classrooms around the city, and only the students in a teacher's class know which permanent portal to use to get to the classroom and when to use it.

Curriculum

The Hidden Academy's faculty includes members of nearly every known race. Students of any sort can find welcome here, whether minotaur, shardmind, or human. Although Rumor focuses on wizard magic, it provides opportunities for anyone who has magical talent to grow and thrive, so the students often include apprentice bards, sorcerers, and other kinds of arcane magic users.

It should come as no surprise that the school of illusion receives the most attention at Rumor. Pog himself set down the curriculum for instructing students in illusion magic, and no one has dared to change his work. Because the phenomena of illusions extend across all arcane traditions, Pog's teachings are valuable no matter what path the student follows.

Goals

No matter how self-serving the academy's origin might have been, Pog's approach to how Rumor would operate was unique, and it speaks to the fact that Pog is a good and fair-minded person at heart. By making education free to those who have the wherewithal to find the school, he ensured that admission went to the people who deserved it, rather than using a system that excluded the poor, the luckless, or the racially unpopular.

Pog, and the wizards who support him, believe that magic holds the key to improving the world, guarding against evil, and leading civilization to a brighter age. These beliefs shape the Hidden Academy's teachings and how it fosters magical talent in those who study there.

Secrets

As noble as the academy's intentions sound, Rumor has a dark side, and once more Pog is at the heart of it. The gnome illusionist genuinely has grand ideas about what he hopes to achieve, but deep down he is inescapably motivated by increasing his own wealth and notoriety. To this end, he occasionally calls upon some students and even a few professors to involve themselves in criminal pursuits, particularly theft, on behalf of the academy.

Another rumor holds that the school is in the business of training spies, and it is a place where certain talented students can learn about espionage, infiltration, and sabotage. Illusion and enchantment are both fine tools for these sorts of activities; that fact could explain why one of Rumor's professors has recently relocated to Callanar—there are no places better for studying enchantment than the White Spires.

In the World

The Hidden Academy has a turbulent relationship with almost every other magical university. Its reputation for excellence breeds competition and jealousy in rival institutions, exacerbated by Rumor's secretive nature. Claiming that one studied at Rumor brings respect and suspicion in equal measure.

In addition, Rumor has never enjoyed a good relationship with its host city. Being hidden means that Rumor considers itself free to operate outside the city's laws, even if it usually abides by them. City leaders suspect the academy of all manner of skulduggery and have even gone so far as to recruit outside mages in an attempt to sniff out its location.

BACKGROUND: SEEKER OF RUMOR

You managed to locate and then studied at the Hidden Academy, Rumor, the magical university believed by many to not even exist. By tailoring your course of study to take advantage of your best talents, you might have picked up some great techniques for sneaking or thieving, or you might have poured your efforts into being the best spellcaster you can be.

Associated Skills: Arcana, Stealth, Thievery
Associated Languages: Elven

Shadowdeep

What need have I of gods when I can raise the dead, twist the spirit, and claim the soul? The divine is for those too weak to seize the power already at hand.

Often considered dark magic, necromancy concerns itself with the stuff of the body, spirit, and soul. Necromancers seek to master the connections between these pieces of existence. Few magical institutions permit much inquiry into necromancy, because it is generally known that mastery of the school tempts the unprepared mind into making perverse bargains, in which the soul is nothing more than currency. History is rife with evidence of how necromancy leads to spiritual and physical corruption. Dreadful names such as Nulathoe, Acererak, and Vecna are stark reminders of its dread price.

And yet, some choose to disregard the dire warnings against pursuing the blackest magic. For those who are unafraid, there are places that can teach them to walk the forbidden path. For those with questions about death's secrets, Shadowdeep has all the answers one could want.

Shadowdeep rests in a catacomb beneath an ancient, ruined city. Pale-faced students walk through tunnels that were once the city's sewers. Old crypts have been excavated by undead slaves, and now serve as classrooms. Dark power floods these passages and rooms, as evidenced by the squirming shadows and the whispers of trapped spirits that linger throughout the area. Shadowdeep is no place for the timid, and only the most determined pupils can cling to sanity long enough to embrace the knowledge this institution imparts.

History

Shadowdeep began as a reaction to the techniques and traditions upheld by Ironstone Academy. A gifted young man named Radicus, who showed great promise as an evoker, ignored the warnings against exploring the deep tunnels beneath Ironstone. He believed there was power in those murky depths capable of expanding his abilities beyond the limits placed on him by his conservative instructors. During one venture into the dark, Radicus happened upon an old chamber that he accessed through a crack in the wall. Stepping through, he found himself in a crypt where a withered husk of a man sat enthroned, dressed in fine raiment with a crown and scepter. As Radicus beheld the thing, it moved and spoke. It identified itself as the lich-lord who once ruled the mountain long before the dwarves claimed the place. It offered to teach Radicus the dark arts in exchange for a fragment of his soul. This price Radicus readily paid.

From then on Radicus descended into the depths nearly every day to study under the lich. The more he learned, the more dark and twisted he became.

Another student witnessed one of Radicus's trips into the tunnels and reported the offense to the headmaster, a white-bearded wizard of great ability. The headmaster confronted Radicus, compelled the truth from him, and led a force into the dark to destroy the evil lurking there. The headmaster's warriors and wizards could not defeat the lich, but they sealed the passage with mystical wards after exiling Radicus to the depths.

Radicus returned to Ironstone Academy years later as a mighty necromancer. He led a mighty undead host up the mountainside and besieged the ancient institution. Radicus hurled death at his former peers, teachers, and protectors. He would not relent until the headmaster agreed to face him in a duel. In the end the necromancer slew his former master, but was himself mortally injured and forced to quit the

battlefield, leaving the undead to be slaughtered by the citadel's defenders.

In fear of dying the ultimate death, Radicus fled to the catacombs of the ruined city that had become his refuge during his long exile. There he reunited with a small cadre of like-minded individuals who considered themselves the necromancer's apprentices. With their aid, Radicus was able to perform the ritual that transformed him into a lich. As he adopted his new form, he also took upon himself a new goal: to strengthen the grip of death magic on the world not by wielding it but by teaching others to emulate him. With Radicus as its headmaster and his original apprentices as its faculty, thus was Shadowdeep born.

Admission

Radicus's name is far from revered, yet his boldness and the power he commanded at his peak gives him an allure to those inclined toward the sinister. Today, the doors of Shadowdeep stand open to anyone who seeks forbidden knowledge. Whether a student has an interest in the dead or a fascination for working the magic that permeates the Shadowfell, the dark wizards at Shadowdeep are welcoming. The institution regards all candidates, no matter their level of ability, as potential assets. The academy has no requirements, makes no demands, and expects no compensation from anyone coming to its doors. All are welcome to study here.

Faculty

Every instructor teaching at Shadowdeep learned magic from Radicus or from someone who was apprenticed to him. The institution's small number of students makes a large faculty unnecessary. Six wizards handle the teaching duties in addition to Radicus, who takes the most promising pupils on as his students and conducts lessons in his extensive quarters far beneath the normal classrooms.

Although everyone who teaches at Shadowdeep ultimately answers to Radicus, the lich has become more and more reclusive of late. He has ceded most of the institution's business to his heir apparent, a skilled necromancer named Emeris, whose skill at battle magic is second only to that of Radicus. The other professors include Kitwell, a nethermancer; two necromancers, a vryloka named Sordana, and the eladrin Melluvial; a binder warlock named Gatherton; and a tiefling warlock named Diemos, who draws magic from the stars themselves.

The professors fear incurring Radicus's wrath, but this does not stop them from plotting against each other. Each one works to curry favor from the academy's master at the expense of his or her rivals. Although the professors rarely resort to actual violence against each other, they are not above playing out their intrigues through their students.

Curriculum

Obviously, necromancy is the main course of study in Shadowdeep. Instruction that deals with other schools of magic and arcane traditions exists only to supplement the primary coursework. Fledgling necromancers spend the first year focusing on anatomy, theology, arcane theory, and philosophy. Only when they demonstrate appropriate expertise in these subjects do professors elevate them to the second rank, where they learn the basic cantrips and simple combat spells that serve as doorways to more advanced magic.

Attrition helps to keep the student body small. Professors reward failure with vicious reprisals, and those who continually fall short of expectations might find their studies truncated when they become subjects of experimentation. Not only do students have to please their masters, they have to guard against treachery from within their own ranks. Students take their cues from their instructors, sometimes plotting against each other to gain status and respect from the faculty.

In addition to wizards, the institution produces binders and other warlocks in small numbers. Diemos and Gatherton mainly teach arcane theory and anatomy, but they watch for students who might make suitable candidates for pacts with the powers with whom they both consort. The students they single out gain the benefit of protection from the rest, but they are given little choice except to become warlocks and forge pacts, often with dark powers or alien entities.

Radicus claims the students who display the best minds for himself, and these chosen few live apart from their fellows, under the lich's instruction. Like the other professors, Radicus has little patience for failure, and even one of these chosen students might end his or her career as an undead thrall. Many of the ones who succeed and complete their training go into the world as Radicus's personal agents, searching for relics and other repositories of magical power to deliver to their master.

Goals

Shadowdeep's goal is to plumb the depths of dark magic, and its faculty and students continually push against the boundaries of what is possible with necromancy. Creating and controlling undead, drawing power from the Shadowfell and infusing it into elemental energy to create attack spells, and using necromancy to augment one's personal abilities and extend one's life span are all part of their efforts. The institution takes on students to put more minds to the task of increasing the scope and knowledge of necromantic magic.

Secrets

The institution avoids overt connections with any deity or other entity, yet rumors persist about religious groups hidden in the academy, made up of both students and faculty. If these groups exist, they have generally succeeded in concealing their activities, but it's a reasonable supposition that Vecna and Orcus have a special appeal to the evil-inclined members of the institution, and there can be little doubt these powers have some presence there.

It is also likely that agents of the Raven Queen have infiltrated the institution. The Raven Queen and her servants regard anything that corrupts or circumvents death as a perversion to be stamped out. To her followers, Shadowdeep is a stain on the world to be cleansed, and even if they do not take direct action against it, they work from within to undermine its efforts. A few professors have found evidence of a Raven Queen cult in the school, including feathers, symbols, and a crude altar hidden in a remote corner of the catacombs. So far they have kept their suspicions to themselves, while working to expose these infiltrators and make examples of them.

In the World

Radicus has never forgotten Ironstone Academy or the lich-lord that still lurks somewhere in the deep tunnels far beneath it. He realizes he was far too reckless in his original efforts. He wants to free the lich that taught him so much and still craves Ironstone's destruction, but he also recognizes it is futile to just throw another undead army against his old school. Instead, he has spent the last few decades researching spells and rituals that would let him destroy the school from within.

Every other magical institution sees Shadowdeep as a dangerous perversion, the result of a warped mind twisted toward evil, and one that compounds that evil by polluting young minds.

BACKGROUND: STUDENT OF DARKNESS

Either because of unfortunate circumstances or a bad decision, you found yourself learning the craft of arcane magic in Shadowdeep. You discovered much about necromancy and dark magic, to be sure, but you might also have picked up extensive knowledge of the healing arts (all the better to manipulate death) or a detailed familiarity with all things undead.

Associated Skills: Arcana, Heal, Religion

About the Author

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Gond's Way: Artificers of the Realms

By Doug Hyatt

Illustration by William O'Connor

"Master artificer? Bah, I'm no master, boy. The real masters are long dead, their bones at the bottom of the sea. When the towers of Lantan still stood proud, then you would have seen true wonders. Mechanical vessels that sailed on the air. Smokepowder tubes that could tear a man in half. Clockwork birds that sang so sweetly your ears would ache to hear them. The Gondsmen of Lantan built all that and more, yet no one now remembers how they did it. All their secrets, drowned beneath the waves. No, best look elsewhere, boy. We're no masters, only vain fools, scrabbling in the dark for some small measure of what was lost."

–Cavandro the Cunning,
High Artificer of Gond,
to a prospective apprentice

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When the tsunamis from the Spellplague buried the island nation of Lantan, they destroyed one of the greatest technological civilizations the Realms had ever seen and dealt a crippling blow to the worshipers of Gond. The High Holy Crafthouse of Inspiration, the seat of Gond's power, crumbled into the sea, along with the marvels of Lantan, such as flying machines, the printing press, and numerous clockwork creations. Although many have surmised that the citizens of Lantan must have foreseen the disaster and formulated some kind of escape plan, modern denizens of the Realms have yet to find any trace of these formidable artificers of days gone by.

In the wake of the Spellplague, Gond's worshipers embraced an itinerant lifestyle, wandering from town to town, seeking employment as engineers, builders, and crafters. Architects designed and rebuilt temples in major cities such as Baldur's Gate and Waterdeep. Explorers combed the Realms in search of lost designs and inventions. Priests established a new network of information and resources. But perhaps the greatest change was experienced by the artificers of Gond.

Bereft of their technology, and vastly diminished in number, the remaining artificers struggled to reinvent themselves in the wake of the Spellplague. Some took on the role of archaeologists, striving to recover remnants of the lost civilization of Lantan. Others recruited and taught new apprentices in an effort to grow their ranks. Most, however, devoted their lives to relearning some facet of crafting made famous by the artificers of old. Without any blueprints to guide them, other than the stories and legends that survived the sinking of Lantan, the servants of the Wonderbringer were forced to experiment and accumulate knowledge entirely on their own.

Over years of assembling clockwork constructs, dabbling in alchemical infusions, engineering siege engines, and enchanting weapons with arcane sigils, the artificers of Gond have steadily reclaimed much of what has been lost and even created new marvels to rival those destroyed in the great floods. Although there is still much work to be done, the Gondsmen now look to the future with hope, confident that their best years lie ahead.

The East Rift

Although Gondsmen roam freely throughout the Realms, ever since the Spellplague the greatest concentration of engineers, crafters, and artifact hunters has gathered in the East Rift. Faced with constant pressure from the Underdark and an overflowing population of gold dwarves in need of new homes, the Deep Lords routinely hire artificers to aid in their ongoing construction and defensive efforts. While the smiths and stoneworkers of Moradin create many engineering marvels, such as collapsible staircases, excavated living quarters, and impenetrable towers, the artificers of Gond add magic to the effort, building ever-burning lights that flare brightly when drow approach, arcane spring traps that hurl unsuspecting invaders into the dark crevasse, giant crossbows that fire and reload of their own accord, and many other wonders to aid in the defense of Eartheart.

Although the turbulent creation of the Underchasm destroyed much, it also thrust many interesting sites to the surface. Ruins of ancient civilizations ripe for exploration have lured many Gondsmen (mostly human and dwarves, but with many other races represented as well) to the East Rift. The church of Gond vies with the gold dwarves of Moradin to scour the depths of the Underchasm for objects that might be of use, but both factions understand that anything that might prove to be helpful in protecting Eartheart is to be turned over to the city. Artificers of Gond ultimately seek to create their own inventions, but they also understand that studying relics from the past can lead to knowledge that might aid them in the future. Especially given the near impossibility of reaching the sunken depths below Lantan's Rest, the dangerous but plentiful excavation sites in the Underchasm have proven to be a powerful attraction.

As the population of Gondsmen in the East Rift grew, and with the understanding that these priests and artificers would assist in any defensive efforts required, the Deep Lords of Eartheart permitted the priests of Gond to build a permanent home in the East Rift.

To this end, Cavandro the Cunning, High Artificer of Gond, led the construction of a new high temple to replace the one that had sunk beneath the waves so long ago: The Crafthouse of Inspiration (see the companion article in *Dungeon* 194).

The Crafthouse of Inspiration serves as a focal point for the activities of the artificers and priests of Gond. Adventurers often bring their treasures to the Crafthouse in the hope that an artificer of Gond will pay handsomely for them. Scholars from throughout the Realms travel to the Crafthouse to apprentice with the artificers there, and to study the creations on display in the Hall of Wonders. Finally, the artificers, craftsmen, and engineers utilize the many raw materials and resources available to the Crafthouse to forge their own inventions, Whether the goal is a levitating platform to transport passengers across chasms in the Rift, or something more routine, such as a sturdy breastplate for a shield dwarf of Eartheart, the devotees of the Wonderbringer toil morning to night in the service of their god.

Roles of Artificers of Gond

The church of Gond celebrates discovery in all its forms—from the merely mundane, such as a new way to brew beer or forge steel, to the truly wondrous, such as an arcane catapult that hurls balls of lightning, or fire-infused crystals to warm the hearth at night. Gondsmen devote every day of their lives to the act of creation. Artificers of Gond occupy a unique

position in the hierarchy of the church's organization, for they possess the arcane knowledge required to understand and craft magic inventions. As a result, the priests of Gond view artificers with great reverence and solicit their help on numerous occasions.

Priests of Gond wander the roads of Faerûn, peddling wares such as books, lanterns, worked leather, and skillfully cut lenses. During their travels, they gather news or rumors of unusual items and strange occurrences. Wherever possible, Gondsmen prefer simply to buy new technology (or old, if an ancient scroll from Lantan surfaces, for example). Sometimes, however, they discover relics in particularly dangerous places, such as an enchanted crown hidden in the lair of a mind flayer, or a clockwork soldier guarding the palace of a despotic tyrant. In such instances, Gondsmen often hire adventuring companies to retrieve the objects for them.

In the East Rift, especially, where many lost civilizations have been exposed by the creation of the Underchasm, the church of Gond routinely employs salvage companies to brave the perils of the Underdark and scour the depths searching for ancient treasures. Whenever magic is involved, artificers are called upon to aid in the acquisition of such objects. Well versed in history and arcana, and armed with a keen understanding of magic items from the distant past, an artificer of Gond often performs tasks that a mere Gondsman cannot, such as identifying runes etched into an ancient weapon, or deducing the function of a sorcerous mechanical device.

Once the Gondsmen acquire an item of interest, they dispatch it to one of the many temples of Gond throughout the Realms for further study. Many of the more potent artifacts end up at the Crafthouse of Inspiration, but the church knows it would be foolish to store all its wondrous objects in only one location. The priests often send scrolls, books, artifacts, weapons, and other notable items to a particular temple, based on the location of their greatest "expert" in a given area, which might be a specialist in any field from metallurgy or leatherworking to the art of war. Although few artificers enjoy a sedentary life, most spend at least some of their time assisting scholars of Gond in decoding the secrets of ancient civilizations and inscrutable devices.

Ultimately, artificers of Gond strive to discover new breakthroughs and devise extraordinary items of staggering power. Ideologically, the church of Gond falls into two camps: those who look to the past, hoping to revive the lost glory of Lantan, and those who look to the future, aspiring to bring altogether new inventions into the Realms. Artificers tend to split along the same lines, with some viewing the crafters of Lantan as infallible masters of all things technological and hoping to duplicate the marvels of the lost artificers of old, and others working ambitiously to forge a name for themselves with their own novel creations.

Artificers of Gond embrace magic, and they believe the use of arcane power can only improve a particular design, not weaken it. Nonetheless, some Gondsmen rely more heavily on magic than others. Whereas some artificers might use pyromancy to make harmless black powder explode as if it were smokepowder, others might eschew the magical solution and seek instead to rediscover the lost secret of smokepowder itself. Some artificers focus on the construction of siege engines and intricate clockwork devices, while others concentrate more on runes, sigils, and infusions of sorcerous power. Regardless of their individual areas of expertise, all artificers and ordinary Gondsmen alike revel in the act of creation, working to expand scientific and arcane knowledge, and bringing new and wondrous inventions into the world.

ARTIFICERS AND THE DIVINE

If a player is uncomfortable with tying his or her arcane character to a divine organization, it is worth noting that the relationship between artificers and the church of Gond can be as formal or informal as the player desires. Some artificers multiclass as clerics and serve as priests of Gond, fully devoted to their god. Others who lack a divine background worship Gond and work to acquire artifacts and knowledge as an agents of the church (most artificers of Gond fall into this category). Some artificers might view the church of Gond as a wealthy patron, buying and selling from the Gondsmen and accepting occasional jobs from them, but without any sort of formal acknowledged relationship. Finally, some artificers might have nothing at all to do with Gond. (Options for these characters are presented later in the article.)

Other Artificers in the Realms

Not all artificers rely on the patronage of Gond for their survival. Some choose to worship other deities related to crafting or knowledge, such as Moradin or Oghma. Other artificers have little use for gods of any sort, preferring to align themselves with sources of arcane learning such as universities or wizard enclaves. Wherever arcane specialists gather, a few artificers are likely to be in their midst. Below are but a few options for players looking to try something different.

Servant of Oghma: In Baldur's Gate, High Priest Faenor presides over the High House of Wonders. Once devoted to Gond, this temple has been rededicated to Oghma, and it now serves as a direct competitor of the Crafthouse of Inspiration in the East Rift. Although Gond ostensibly serves Oghma, in the mortal realm their servants engage in a friendly rivalry in the acquisition of items of magical power. Artificers of Oghma generally tend a bit more toward bookishness than those of Gond, and specialize more in the retrieval and study of artifacts than in their creation. Servants of Oghma believe that all knowledge should be distributed to the masses, in sharp contrast to the Gondsmen, who are much more secretive about their operations and inventions.

The Imaskari: In the great tower of Skyclave, the Body of Artificers, Planners, and Apprehenders assists Empress Ususi in the governing of High Imaskar. Ambitious and driven, the artificers of Skyclave perform many different functions. Some work as builders, providing additions to the great tower. Others pursue political power, vying with their competitors to move up the ranks in the Body. Many artificers serve among the collectors, the group responsible for gathering information and resources for Skyclave.

Red Crafter: If there is one group the Gondsmen loathe and fear, it is the Red Wizards of Thay. In the service of the Citadel, the wizards and their apprentices acquire magical devices and artifacts, some of which they sell but many of which they hoard for their own use. Powerful artificers collude with the Red Wizards not only to identify items of great value, but to create them as well. Evil and unscrupulous, the Red Crafters, as they are called by the Gondsmen, will do anything to further the influence of the Citadel.

Spellguard Enchanter: The Spellguard of Silverymoon welcomes arcane characters of all sorts, and artificers are no exception. Artificers among the Spellguard focus on enchantments, such as runes and sigils that increase the efficacy of the swordmages' weapons or the wizards' implements. Silverymoon is also home to artificers of a more scholarly bent, with its university and library attracting many in their pursuit of arcane knowledge.

Roleplaying an Artificer of the Realms

Although many artificers in the realms share a common bond in their devotion to the Wonderbringer, they often have widely different goals and interests. Some Gondsmen work to restore the lost glory of Lantan, while others look to nurture the growing population of crafters in the East Rift. Some locate and study ancient artifacts from the Underdark, while others strive to create inventions never before seen in the Realms. Below are a few options to consider if you are roleplaying an artificer in Faerûn.

Lantan Scholar

You have devoted your life to the study of the fallen civilization of Lantan. Gathering scraps of knowledge in your travels, you seek to reconstruct as much of the lost technology as possible. Every ancient artifact and every dusty tome might contain a clue that could lead to important discoveries. Ultimately, you would like to find a way to defeat the sea monster that guards Lantan's Rest and launch a thorough expedition to recover treasures long buried beneath the waves.

Roleplaying Tips: You believe that the world's current civilization is but a shadow of the greatness that once was Lantan's. You are obsessed with arcane knowledge, as well as with the history of the world. You think you can learn much more from the great artificers of old than from any modern teacher. Finding a way to access the ruins of Lantan occupies most of your waking thoughts.

Eartheart Engineer

You are an expert battle engineer specialized in devices relating to the art of war. Armed with a keen knowledge of architecture and a deep understanding of magic, you create wondrous inventions that aid in the defense of Eartheart. Although you are perfectly capable of building walls, fortifications, and mundane mechanical traps, you prefer to leave that sort of thing to the gold dwarf smiths. Instead, like your patron deity Gond, you strive to forge true marvels, such as metal constructs that will fight of their own accord, fiery traps that detonate when your enemies approach, and floating clockwork eyes that scout for danger.

Roleplaying Tips: You are calm and analytical in most situations and are capable of looking at problems from many angles. Every artifact, scroll, or other lost bit of knowledge you discover is another tool you can add to your arsenal. Extremely loyal to those you befriend, you seek only to shield those dearest to you from harm.

Procurer of Gond

The acquisition of ancient treasure is often a dangerous game. Whether the job requires venturing into the Underdark in search of a relic from a bygone civilization, or slipping in and out of a nobleman's mansion with the owner none the wiser, you stand ready to perform whatever task the church of Gond requires. Skilled in stealth and secrecy, you specialize in retrieving items of interest from Gond's rivals, and you delight in matching wits with organizations such as the collectors of High Imaskar, the Red Crafters of Thay, or the procurers of Oghma who seek items for the High House of Wonders.

Roleplaying Tips: Your loyalty, first and foremost, belongs to the church of Gond. Whatever task the Gondsmen set for you is what you must do. Cautious, furtive, and above all competent, you focus with single-minded determination on achieving your goal. You enjoy the rivalry between the various organizations trying to obtain wondrous items, especially when you can prove that your skills far surpass theirs.

Arcane Scientist

Any master Gondsman can craft a bell or build a bridge. Unlike these lowly engineers, you focus on what truly distinguishes an artificer of Gond from a mundane craftsman: the power of magic. Mechanical devices and elaborate contrivances interest you little. Fascinated by enchantments, runes, and sigils, you instead strive to turn everyday things into items of great power. You mix arcane forces and ordinary objects with reckless abandon. Every wild experiment offers an opportunity to create something the world has never before seen.

Roleplaying Tips: You are often heard to utter the phrase "What's the worst that could happen?" typically followed by an explosion (or two, or three). Insatiably curious, you often throw caution to the wind for a chance to acquire an important bit of knowledge or to try something you have never attempted before. You prefer powers that enhance items, such as sigils and enchantments. You have little patience with fellow adventurers (or people in general) who are overly cautious or timid. If there were no brave souls willing to expand the frontiers of knowledge, there would be no progress.

Skyclave Exile

You hail from the capital of High Imaskar, where you sought entry into the ranks of the Body of Artificers, Planners, and Apprehenders. Betrayed by your so-called colleagues at every turn, you failed to navigate the complex political intrigues of Skyclave and earned the enmity of some influential foes. You fled Skyclave to seek your fortunes in the world. Weary of the ambitions of others, you have now embraced your new life as an explorer and artificer of Gond. You travel the Realms seeking to help those in need, and to use your knowledge of arcana and devices to improve the lives of those around you.

Roleplaying Tips: You despise politics and intrigue in all their forms, preferring directness and honesty instead. Although you have left the Imaskari behind, you still retain some of their sense of cultural superiority, and you tend toward arrogance when dealing with other people. Beneath your haughty exterior, however, lies a genuine desire to help others.

New Artificer Powers

The powers in this section can be selected by any artificer of the appropriate level.

Level 1 Encounter Power

Artificers of Gond devised *ice shard traps* to protect their artifacts from thieves. Any enemy unwise enough to wander into this most elementary of artificer traps faces a shower of razor-sharp, frigid projectiles.

Ice Shard Traps — Artificer Attack 1

You spread invisible patches of ice on the battlefield. When your enemies stumble into the traps, a hail of crystals erupts.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Cold, Conjuration, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 5

Effect: You conjure two ice shard traps in two different unoccupied squares on the ground within range. The traps are invisible to your enemies and last until the end of your next turn. When an enemy enters a trap's square, make the following attack against that enemy. Then the trap disappears.

Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d8 + Intelligence modifier cold damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 cold and grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Level 2 Utility Power

Whether seeking to pilfer treasures from their rivals in Skyclave or exploring the perilous depths of Underhome, Gondsmen frequently use *shadowy figurine* to avoid unwanted attention. The diminutive carving summoned by this spell blankets you and your companions in darkness.

Shadowy Figurine — Artificer Utility 2

Your magic creates an ebon figurine cloaked in shadow. Tendrils of dim light stretch from the figurine and envelop you and your allies in obscurity.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Conjuration
Minor Action **Ranged** 10
Effect: You conjure a shadowy figurine in a square within range. The figurine lasts until the end of your next turn. While within 2 squares of the figurine, you and your allies have partial concealment and a +4 power bonus to Stealth checks.
Sustain Minor: The figurine persists until the end of your next turn, and you can move it up to 5 squares.

Level 5 Daily Power

Although the secret of smokepowder sank along with the rest of Lantan, artificers honor the memory of this forgotten technological marvel through this spell. After imbuing harmless black powder with arcane fire, you sling the dangerous concoction at your foe. The resulting explosion engulfs the enemy in flames and creates an opening for one of your allies.

Smokepowder Detonation — Artificer Attack 5

You hurl a vial of black powder at your enemy's feet, creating a fiery explosion. One of your allies takes advantage of the confusion and strikes while your opponent's guard is down.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + Intelligence modifier fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).
Effect: One of your allies adjacent to the target can make a melee basic attack against it as a free action. If your attack hit the target, the ally gains a power bonus to his or her attack roll equal to your Constitution or Wisdom modifier.

Level 7 Encounter Power

Arc infusion combines the restorative effect of artificer infusions with the raw power of channeled lightning. The arcane energy surges from your foe to a nearby ally, relieving your companion of a harmful condition, then vaults back to the enemy and sends it reeling.

Arc Infusion — Artificer Attack 7

Lightning from your attack leaps to a nearby ally, infusing him or her with arcane energy, before streaking back.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Lightning, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** or **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Intelligence modifier lightning damage, and one of your allies within 5 squares of the target can make a saving throw with a power bonus equal to your Wisdom modifier. If the ally saves, the target takes 5 extra lightning damage and is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Level 17 Encounter Power

Artificers of Gond developed *siphon fate* for the occasions when Eartheart defenders found themselves vastly outnumbered. With this spell, you drain the luck from your foes and draw it into your weapon. You then channel the siphoned power to one of your nearby allies.

Siphon Fate — Artificer Attack 17

Your arcane strikes draw fortune's boon from your opponents, and you surround a companion with a nimbus of luck.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Psychic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** or **Ranged** weapon
Target: One or two creatures
Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Intelligence modifier psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and all defenses until the end of your next turn.
Effect: Choose one ally within 5 squares of you. Until the end of your next turn, that ally gains a power bonus to attack rolls and all defenses equal to 2 + the number of targets you hit with this power.

Level 25 Daily Power

When you stand alongside a seasoned warrior and use *synchronized weaponry*, the two of you become as one, striking simultaneously against a single foe.

Synchronized Weaponry — Artificer Attack 25

You forge a mystical link between your weapon and that of your comrade's. Whenever one weapon strikes a foe, the other responds in kind.

Daily ✦ Arcane
Minor Action **Close** burst 10
Target: One ally in the burst
Effect: When the target hits an enemy with a weapon attack, you can use an arcane at-will attack power that has the weapon keyword against the same enemy as an immediate reaction. When you hit an enemy with a weapon attack, the target can make a basic attack with a weapon against the same enemy as an immediate reaction. This effect lasts until the end of your next turn.
Sustain Minor: The effect persists until the end of your next turn.

Level 27 Encounter Power

Artificers of Gond devised *coiled spring traps* to defend sensitive areas from Underdark assaults. Concealed from view by arcane energy, the enormous springs created by this spell propel your unwary foes into the air. They then hit the ground, their defenses weakened.

Coiled Spring Traps **Artificer Attack 27**

You mine the battlefield with invisible springs. When your foes step on them, the coils play havoc with their progress.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Conjuration, Force, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10

Effect: You conjure three coiled spring traps in three different unoccupied squares on the ground within range. The traps are invisible to your enemies and last until the end of your next turn. When an enemy enters a trap's square, make the following attack against that enemy. Then the trap disappears.

Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d10 + Intelligence modifier force damage, and you slide the target up to 5 squares and knock it prone. The target takes a penalty to AC and Fortitude equal to your Constitution or Wisdom modifier until the end of your next turn.

Artificer Feats

The following feats are available to characters who meet the prerequisites.

Arcane Trapsmith

Hours spent studying the art of preparing and neutralizing traps have honed your skills to perfection. You have a keen mind for recognizing and disabling such obstacles.

Prerequisite: Artificer, training in Thievery

Benefit: You can use your Intelligence modifier instead of your Dexterity modifier when making Thievery checks to disable traps or open locks. In addition, you gain a +4 feat bonus to Arcana checks related to traps or hazards.

Hammer of Gond

You have learned how to channel arcane power into Gond's favored weapon, the warhammer. You can hurl a warhammer at your foes as well.

Prerequisite: Artificer, must worship Gond

Benefit: You gain proficiency with the warhammer, and you can use it as an implement. In addition, you can treat the warhammer as a heavy thrown weapon with a range of 6/12.

About the Author

Doug Hyatt is a computational biologist living in Tennessee. A veteran of the Human Genome Project, he has coauthored publications in both *Science* and *Nature*. When not DMing or designing for the *Dungeons & Dragons Roleplaying Game*, he can often be found playing chess, poker, or *Magic: The Gathering*. This is his first article for *Dragon*.

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Unearthed Arcana:
A Hero's First Steps

Rules for Level 0 Characters

By Philippe-Antoine Menard

Illustration by William O'Connor

A clear divide exists among the denizens of the D&D worlds. On one side, you have innumerable hordes of monsters and scheming villains. On the other, you have a few isolated pockets of ill-defended city-states, baronies, farmsteads, and other islands of civilization. Then there are those that invariably get caught in between: adventurers and heroes.

The existence of such stalwarts of heroism raises some questions. How does one rise toward power, fame and riches through adventuring? Are heroes handpicked by destiny, or forged through trials and resilience? What if adventurers are gifted individuals who scrambled to grab the right opportunity when it passed? What if becoming a hero was all about learning the lessons of making those first steps into danger and the unknown?

Here is a new set of options to explore some of those what-ifs by starting a campaign with a party of level 0 characters. Such characters are promising individuals, usually tweens or teens (or the nonhuman equivalent). They are the innkeepers' children, blacksmiths' apprentices, and farmers' sons and daughters who have not had much formal training in a craft yet, much less that of an adventuring class. Although they have managed to develop a few knacks that mark them as potential heroes, they still need to test their mettle—and survive—before they can become full-fledged adventurers.

THEIR INITIAL TEST

"Temple of the Weeping Goddess" (*Dungeon* 194) is designed to launch a new party of level 0 characters on their careers. It can also serve as an example to the DM of how to construct such an adventure, if he or she wants to take a different approach to how the would-be heroes came to be a group.

Character Creation

A level 0 character starts as an above-average representative of his or her race. What sets each one apart from the norm is an innate affinity for one of the game's six power sources (arcane, divine, martial, primal, psionic, or shadow). This affinity is represented by an at-will power and training in one skill associated with that power source.

To create a level 0 character, follow the steps described below and use the appropriate rulebooks for details.

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1. The Birth of a Hero

Before you start making game-based decisions, give some thought to your character's early life experiences. Ask yourself what made your character stand out from the crowd at a young age. The answer to that question might set you on a particular path as you create your character's statistics.

For instance, if you grew up as a street urchin who learned how to survive in the back streets of a port city, your physical prowess is probably above average, and you might be headed for a career as a martial character.

Or perhaps, as a youngster in a rural village, you spent a lot of time in the surrounding forest. Now, after tapping into the wellspring of primal power in this way, you feel a kinship with the natural wilderness that you cannot ignore.

2. Choose Power Source

Select one of the six power sources described below. Your character gains the at-will power associated with that source.

A level 0 character does not have a class, but the power source you select now will dictate the classes you can choose from when your character reaches level 1 (see "Leveling Up").

Each of the powers in this section has a normal effect plus an additional effect that can be triggered by the expenditure of an experience token. See page 4 for details about experience tokens.

Arcane

If your early life was marked by a curiosity about the arcane, that could lead you to a career as an arcane spellcaster.

When you choose the arcane power source, you gain the *arcane missile* power.

Arcane Missile Attack

A pulsating projectile of barely controlled magic flies from your opened palm, leaving a trail of smoke and a strange smell in its wake.

At-Will ✦ Arcane, Force, Varies
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Effect: 3 force damage. You can spend an experience token to choose one of the following effects.
- ✦ *Leader:* One ally of yours adjacent to the target gains a +2 power bonus to AC until the start of your next turn.
- ✦ *Controller:* You slide the target up to 2 squares.
- ✦ *Striker:* Choose cold, fire, or lightning. You deal 3 extra damage of that type to the target.
- ✦ *Defender:* You teleport an ally of yours who is adjacent to the target up to 2 squares.

Divine

However you came to make it, your choice of the divine power source represents your willingness to be guided by a deity in exchange for a shred of that entity's strength.

When you choose the divine power source, you gain the *faith strike* power.

Faith Strike Attack

You focus your profound belief in the gods into your weapon, letting it guide your blow.

At-Will ✦ Divine, Varies, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength + 2 or Wisdom + 2 vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength or Wisdom modifier damage. **You can** spend an experience token to choose one of the following effects.
- ✦ *Leader:* An ally adjacent to you can spend a healing surge and regain 5 additional hit points.
- ✦ *Controller:* You push the target up to 2 squares.
- ✦ *Striker:* You deal 1 radiant damage to each enemy adjacent to the target.
- ✦ *Defender:* If the target moves before the start of your next turn, it takes 3 radiant damage.

Martial

Of all the paths you could follow, martial power seems to be the least mysterious and the most straightforward.

When you choose the martial power source, you gain the *sparring thrust* power.

Sparring Thrust Attack

You engage your foe, using basic techniques you learned while sparring with men-at-arms and knights.

At-Will ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength + 2 or Dexterity + 2 vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength or Dexterity modifier damage. You can spend an experience token to choose one of the following effects.
- ✦ *Leader:* An ally of yours who is adjacent to the target can shift 1 square as a free action.
- ✦ *Controller:* The target falls prone.
- ✦ *Striker:* You deal 1d6 extra damage to the target.
- ✦ *Defender:* You mark the target until the end of your next turn.

Primal

The forces of nature are as undeniable as they are unassailable. You recognize this fact if you decide to tap into the power of the primal spirits.

When you choose the primal power source, you gain the *quaking stomp* power.

Quaking Stomp Attack

You bring your weapon down on the ground in a resounding crash, calling the spirits' wrath to rattle your foe.

At-Will ✦ Primal, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1[W] + Wisdom modifier damage. You can spend an experience token to choose one of the following effects.
- ✦ *Leader:* One ally of yours who is adjacent to the target gains 3 temporary hit points.
- ✦ *Controller:* The target is immobilized until the end of its next turn.
- ✦ *Striker:* You deal 2 extra damage to the target, or 3 if it is prone.
- ✦ *Defender:* You push the target 1 square and then shift 1 square into the space the target vacated.

Psionic

The ability to generate energy directly from one's mind might be unusual, but if you are one of those favored few, you have already discovered one of the secrets of psionic power.

When you choose the psionic power source, you gain the *psychic blast* power.

Psychic Blast Attack

You unleash your anger in waves of psionic energy against the threats surrounding you.

At-Will ✦ Psionic, Psychic
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each enemy in the burst
Attack: Intelligence or Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 2 + Intelligence or Charisma modifier psychic damage. You can spend an experience token to choose one of the following effects.
- ✦ *Leader:* A dying ally within 5 squares of you can spend a healing surge and regain 5 additional hit points.
- ✦ *Controller:* You slide the target 1 square.
- ✦ *Striker:* The target grants combat advantage to you until the end of your next turn.
- ✦ *Defender:* You can pull each enemy within 2 squares of you 1 square.

Shadow

Darkness, like any tool, reflects the purpose and the intent of its user. Whatever your goal in life, the ability to manipulate the power of shadow can bring you closer to it.

When you choose the shadow power source, you gain the *shadow's sting* power.

Shadow's Sting Attack

As you move in to attack, your growing inner darkness imbues your weapon with the terrible power of eternal night.

At-Will ✦ Shadow, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Dexterity + 2 vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Dexterity modifier damage. You can spend an experience token to choose one of the following effects.
- ✦ *Leader:* Each ally adjacent to you gains partial concealment until the end of your next turn.
- ✦ *Controller:* You push the target up to 2 squares.
- ✦ *Striker:* The target takes ongoing 2 damage (save ends).
- ✦ *Defender:* You and an adjacent ally can each shift 1 square, swapping positions.

3. Choose Race

Choose any race your DM allows. Your character gains all of that race's bonuses, trained skills, powers, and other abilities as if it were a level 1 character of that race.

4. Determine Ability Scores

Choose one of the two sets of scores listed below and assign the numbers to the six abilities as you see fit. (Obviously, you'll want to assign your highest score or one of your highest scores to the ability you use for your attack power.)

Promising

14	14	12	10	10	10

Prodigy

16	12	12	10	10	8

Note: If these numbers seem low, that's because your character isn't at level 1 yet. See "Leveling Up," page 4, for more information.

5. Skills

Your character gains training in one of the three skills associated with your choice of power source. If you chose one of these three as a trained skill from your race, you gain one of the other two as a second trained skill.

Arcane: Arcana, Diplomacy, or History.
Divine: Heal, Insight, or Religion.
Martial: Athletics, Intimidate, or Streetwise.
Primal: Acrobatics, Nature, or Perception.
Psionic: Diplomacy, Insight, or Perception.
Shadow: Bluff, Stealth, or Streetwise.

6. Feats

Your character gains feats granted by your race, if any.

7. Equipment

Your character starts with a set of ordinary clothes, a belt, one simple weapon, and a backpack. Choose one other piece of adventuring gear or weapon worth 5 gp or less. Level 0 characters do not start play with armor, nor do they have any armor or weapon proficiencies.

8. Defenses and Hit Points

Your character starts with hit points equal to 6 + your Constitution score and a number of healing surges equal to 4 + your Constitution modifier.

Calculate your defenses, using your ability modifiers as normal.

You start play with 1 action point.

9. Alignment and Worship

You can choose the alignment of your character and the deity or deities he or she worships at this point. These choices can also be left for later if you want to see how your first adventure unfolds. In such a case, your character begins play as unaligned.

Experience Tokens

Level 0 characters do not gain experience points as their higher-level counterparts do. All characters advance to level 1 once they meet the goal of their initial adventure (see "Leveling Up").

During that initial adventure, instead of XP, characters gain experience tokens, which they can use to trigger role-related effects during combat encounters. Each level 0 character starts the adventure with one experience token and gains another at the end of each encounter, regardless of the encounter's outcome. At the table, any small objects such as poker chips or glass beads can be used to keep track of tokens.

When your character spends an experience token, that represents a creative stunt or maneuver that the character pulls off when dealing with immediate danger. Once per round, when you hit with your at-will attack power, after applying the normal effect of the hit you can spend an experience token to trigger an additional role-related effect. You hand the token to the DM, pick one of the effects described in the power, and apply it as well.

Make sure to keep track of which role-related effect you choose whenever you use a token. This record might be important after the adventure, since it highlights what your character did during the session, and can suggest a class or classes your character might choose from when he or she reaches level 1.

For example, Jake's character, Torek, hits a bloodied kobold with his arcane power, then decides to add on the striker effect to deal 3 extra damage. Jake gives one of his experience tokens to the DM, marks one use of a striker effect somewhere on his character sheet, and deals the extra damage to the kobold.

Level 0 Heroes in Play

With no armor, no weapon proficiencies, and limited healing and skills, level 0 characters are not yet the symbols of competence their heroic tier counterparts have become.

Combat encounters, even against level 1 minions, are dangerous endeavors that must be approached with more careful planning and teamwork than required of higher-level characters.

The characters in a level 0 party have significantly lower chances to hit with melee weapons and have very low defenses, particularly AC. Thus, they need to make maximum use of flanking, cover, and terrain features that give them any kind of edge. Players should think about on strategies such as delaying their turns and readying actions to fully exploit advantages the group can squeeze from a battlefield.

Roleplaying encounters and skill challenges are opportunities for characters to succeed at endeavors that do not directly threaten harm to them, or at least to find out what such experiences are like. Either way, they benefit from the experience by gaining an experience token to cash in the next time real trouble shows up.

Leveling Up

Once the party's initial adventure is over, every character gets to level up—essentially, finish the process of creating a level 1 character by making the final few decisions.

0. Fresh Start

To begin leveling up, your character loses the attack power from his or her choice of power source and also loses any unspent experience tokens. In their place you receive the powers and other benefits of being level 1 in a class, and you begin earning genuine experience points.

1. Class Choice

You can choose whatever class you want within the limits of your initial power source choice. Before you do so, review how you spent your experience tokens during the initial adventure. This is a direct representation of the choices you made for your character during play and may reflect your playing style preferences. Reviewing the story told by these tokens can provide an insight, perhaps making you consider a class you would not otherwise have played.

For example, at the end of Torek's first adventure, Jake reviews his character sheet and realizes that he spent most of his tokens on striker effects. Even though he had an eye on becoming a wizard before he set out on his adventure, Jake decides that Torek will follow his instincts and pick sorcerer for his class at level 1.

2. Ability Scores

Before you start gaining the features and other benefits of your class, increase two of your ability scores by 2 each. By taxing yourself in your first adventure, you have unlocked some innate potential you weren't aware you had.

Most likely you'll give these increases to two of the abilities that are most important to your class. After you've made these decisions and your ability scores are final, you're ready to complete your class's details.

3. Class Completion

Now that you know your character's race, class, and ability scores, you can finish making the character into a level 1 adventurer.

- You gained one trained skill at level 0. Choose other trained skills from your class's skills list up to your class's maximum.
- Determine your class features and powers and make any feat selections according to your class's description.
- Because of your success on your first adventure, you have nearly 100 gp to spend on equipment. This is your chance to purchase armor or something else essential to your class, such as an implement.
- Finally, determine your defenses and hit points as indicated in your class's description.

Where Are They Now?

Leveling up implies an "off-screen" period when each level 0 character seeks out a class trainer, a mentor, or an organization to learn the ropes of a new class.

If your group intends to start a campaign with these new characters, each player should be invited to spin a yarn about what happened to the character when the party meets for the next adventure. The stories could identify organizations that trained the characters and the names of some of the individuals that were involved (tutors, friends, rivals, romantic interests). The whole gaming group should help each other come up with ideas and forge interesting relationships between their characters. For example, a trainee rogue could have been sent to rob the keep where another character was trying to achieve knighthood, thus placing both in the same area during that prelude period.

All these elements can provide your DM with fodder for future plot arcs in the upcoming campaign. Furthermore, the DMs and players can consider assigning backgrounds (see *Player's Handbook 2*) to the heroes based on these stories and the training they underwent. For example, this could cover the rare cases where a character had a skill at level 0 that's not on the character's class list.

And thus, later in the party's career, when questioned by inquisitive dukes and bards in search of inspiration, the heroes will be able to tell the story of "what made us become adventurers."

About the Author

Phil Menard is a freelance writer who is better known as "ChattyDM" on the D&D forums and message boards. When he was invited to tackle the subject of 0-level characters in 4th Edition, he jumped on that grenade and managed not to blow himself to bits.

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Wizard Attack Powers by School

This index lists the wizard attack powers associated with each school of magic (as of September 2011). A few powers, such as *horrific shadow*, belong to more than one school. Some attack powers do not belong to a school of magic at all and therefore do not appear here.

In this article, a number of wizard attack powers (each marked with an asterisk) are assigned to schools for the first time. The schools of magic will be further populated by spells in *Player's Option: Heroes of the Feywild*™ and *Player's Option: Heroes of the Elemental Chaos*™.

ENCHANTMENT

Lvl	Type	Spell	Primary Source
1	At-Will	Beguiling Strands	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*™
1	At-Will	Hypnotism	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
1	Encounter	Charm of Misplaced Wrath	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
1	Daily	Sleep	*Player's Handbook*®, *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*™
3	Encounter	Blissful Ignorance	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
5	Daily	Tasha's Forcible Conscription	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
7	Encounter	Charm of the Defender	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
9	Daily	Symphony of the Dark Court	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
9	Daily	Tome of Transposition*	*Dragon*® 380
13	Encounter	Arcane Chastisement*	*Dragon* 382
13	Encounter	Hold Monster	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
13	Encounter	Mesmeric Hold	*Player's Handbook*
15	Daily	Slumber of the Winter Court	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
17	Encounter	Charm of False Glory*	*Dragon* 381
17	Encounter	Mass Charm	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
19	Daily	Wrath of Battle	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
23	Encounter	Charm of False Heroism	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
25	Daily	Maze	*Player's Handbook*
25	Daily	Mind of Rage	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
27	Encounter	Charm of Puppet Strings*	*Dragon* 381
27	Encounter	Confusion	*Player's Handbook*, *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
27	Encounter	Mind-Numbing Presence*	*Dragon* 382
29	Daily	Legion's Hold	*Player's Handbook*, *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*

*This power gains the enchantment keyword with this article.

EVOCATION

Lvl	Type	Spell	Primary Source
1	At-Will	Arc Lightning	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
1	At-Will	Chilling Cloud*	*PH Heroes: Series 1*
1	At-Will	Cloud of Daggers	*Player's Handbook*
1	At-Will	Erupting Flare*	*Dragon* 388
1	At-Will	Freezing Burst	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
1	At-Will	Magic Missile	*Player's Handbook*, *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
1	At-Will	Ray of Frost	*Player's Handbook*
1	At-Will	Scorching Burst	*Player's Handbook*
1	At-Will	Storm Pillar*	*Arcane Power*™
1	At-Will	Thunderwave	*Player's Handbook*
1	Encounter	Astral Wasp*	*Arcane Power*
1	Encounter	Burning Hands	*Player's Handbook*, *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
1	Encounter	Chill Strike	*Player's Handbook*
1	Encounter	Conduit of Ice*	*Dragon* 382
1	Encounter	Empowering Lightning*	*Arcane Power*
1	Encounter	Force Orb	*Player's Handbook*
1	Encounter	Icy Terrain	*Player's Handbook*
1	Encounter	Orbmaster's Incendiary Detonation*	*Arcane Power*

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EVOCATION (CONTINUED)

Lvl	Type	Spell	Primary Source
1	Encounter	Skewering Spikes*	*Dragon* 383
1	Encounter	Staffstrike Corrosion*	*Arcane Power*
1	Daily	Acid Arrow	*Player's Handbook*
1	Daily	Arcane Whirlwind*	*Dragon* 383
1	Daily	Flaming Sphere	*Player's Handbook*
1	Daily	Fountain of Flame	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
1	Daily	Freezing Cloud	*Player's Handbook*
1	Daily	Grease*	*Arcane Power*
1	Daily	Rolling Thunder*	*Arcane Power*
3	Encounter	Arcane Bolt*	*Dragon* 381
3	Encounter	Chill Claws*	*Arcane Power*
3	Encounter	Cinderfall*	*Dragon* 383
3	Encounter	Color Spray	*Player's Handbook*
3	Encounter	Fire Shroud	*Player's Handbook*
3	Encounter	Icy Rays	*Player's Handbook*
3	Encounter	Melting Pool*	*Dragon* 382
3	Encounter	Pinioning Vortex*	*Arcane Power*
3	Encounter	Radiant Pillar*	*Dragon* 380
3	Encounter	Shock Beetle Swarm*	*Arcane Power*
3	Encounter	Shock Sphere*	*Player's Handbook, Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
5	Daily	Acid Mire*	*Arcane Power*
5	Daily	Bigby's Icy Grasp	*Player's Handbook*
5	Daily	Fireball	*Player's Handbook, Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
5	Daily	Glitterdust*	*Arcane Power*
5	Daily	Scattering Shock*	*Dragon* 383
5	Daily	Stinking Cloud	*Player's Handbook*
5	Daily	Thunderstaff*	*Dragon* 380
5	Daily	Web	*Player's Handbook*
7	Encounter	Concussive Echo*	*Arcane Power*
7	Encounter	Corrosive Mist*	*Dragon* 383
7	Encounter	Fire Burst	*Player's Handbook*
7	Encounter	Fire Sea Travel*	*Dragon* 388
7	Encounter	Lightning Bolt	*Player's Handbook, Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
7	Encounter	Repelling Sphere*	*Dragon* 382
7	Encounter	Spectral Ram	*Player's Handbook*
7	Encounter	Thunder Cage*	*Dragon* 375
7	Encounter	Tomebound Ooze*	*Arcane Power*
7	Encounter	Twist of Space*	*Arcane Power*
7	Encounter	Winter's Wrath	*Player's Handbook*
7	Encounter	Worms of Minauros*	*Arcane Power*
9	Daily	Firescythe*	*Dragon* 383
9	Daily	Ice Storm	*Player's Handbook, Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
9	Daily	Lightning Serpent	*Player's Handbook*
9	Daily	Mordenkainen's Guardian Hound*	*Arcane Power*
9	Daily	Mordenkainen's Sword	*Player's Handbook*
9	Daily	Wall of Fire	*Player's Handbook*
13	Encounter	Arcane Arrows*	*Dragon* 381
13	Encounter	Earth Brute*	*Arcane Power*
13	Encounter	Entangling Force*	*Arcane Power*
13	Encounter	Frostburn	*Player's Handbook*
13	Encounter	Prismatic Burst	*Player's Handbook*
13	Encounter	Thunderlance	*Player's Handbook*
13	Encounter	Twisting Lightning	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
13	Encounter	Wake of Fire	*Dragon* 388
15	Daily	Ball Lightning*	*Arcane Power*
15	Daily	Bigby's Grasping Hands	*Player's Handbook*
15	Daily	Blast of Cold	*Player's Handbook*

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EVOCATION (CONTINUED)

Lvl	Type	Spell	Primary Source
15	Daily	Cone of Cold	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
15	Daily	Otiluke's Resilient Sphere	*Player's Handbook*
15	Daily	Prismatic Beams	*Player's Handbook*
15	Daily	Stonewrack*	*Arcane Power*
15	Daily	Wall of Ice	*Player's Handbook*
17	Encounter	Combust	*Player's Handbook*
17	Encounter	Crushing Titan's Fist	*Player's Handbook*
17	Encounter	Dancing Bolts*	*Arcane Power*
17	Encounter	Dancing Flames	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
17	Encounter	Force Volley	*Player's Handbook*
17	Encounter	Furnace of Sand*	*Arcane Power*
17	Encounter	Gripping Chains*	*Arcane Power*
17	Encounter	Ice Tomb	*Player's Handbook*
17	Encounter	Shard of the Endless Avalanche*	*Arcane Power*
17	Encounter	Wand Coupling*	*Dragon* 380
19	Daily	Acid Wave	*Player's Handbook*
19	Daily	Cloudkill	*Player's Handbook*
19	Daily	Disintegrate	*Player's Handbook*
19	Daily	Feast of Destruction*	*Dragon* 380
19	Daily	Oppressive Force*	*Arcane Power*
23	Encounter	Acid Storm	*Player's Handbook*
23	Encounter	Arcane Volley*	*Dragon* 381
23	Encounter	Astral Claw*	*Arcane Power*
23	Encounter	Chain Lightning	*Player's Handbook, Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
23	Encounter	Flaming Rebuke*	*Dragon* 388
23	Encounter	Freezing Bolts*	*Arcane Power*
23	Encounter	Staffstrike Shock*	*Arcane Power*
23	Encounter	Thunderclap	*Player's Handbook*
25	Daily	Bubbling Acid*	*Arcane Power*
25	Daily	Cinder Storm*	*Arcane Power*
25	Daily	Delayed Blast Fireball	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
25	Daily	Elemental Maw	*Player's Handbook*
25	Daily	Orbmaster's Prismatic Sphere*	*Arcane Power*
25	Daily	Prismatic Spray	*Player's Handbook*
27	Encounter	Forcecage	*Player's Handbook*
27	Encounter	Orb of Doom*	*Dragon* 380
27	Encounter	Sequestering Force	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
27	Encounter	Tomebound Bloodbeast*	*Arcane Power*
29	Daily	Greater Ice Storm	*Player's Handbook*
29	Daily	Meteor Swarm	*Player's Handbook, Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
29	Daily	Prismatic Wall*	*Arcane Power*

*This power gains the evocation keyword with this article.

ILLUSION

Lvl	Type	Spell	Primary Source
1	At-Will	Illusory Ambush	*Arcane Power*
1	At-Will	Nightmare Eruption	*Dragon* 380
1	At-Will	Phantasmal Assault	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
1	At-Will	Phantom Bolt	*Arcane Power*
1	At-Will	Phantom Cage	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
1	At-Will	Winged Horde*	*Dragon* 381
1	Encounter	Grasping Shadows	*Arcane Power*
1	Encounter	Illusory Obstacles	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
1	Daily	Horrid Whispers	*Arcane Power*
1	Daily	Phantom Chasm	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
3	Encounter	Hypnotic Pattern	*Arcane Power*

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ILLUSION (CONTINUED)

Lvl	Type	Spell	Primary Source
3	Encounter	Maze of Mirrors	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
5	Daily	Phantasmal Assailant	*Arcane Power*
5	Daily	Visions of Avarice	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
7	Encounter	Enemies Abound	*Arcane Power*
7	Encounter	Phantom Foes	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
9	Daily	Face of Death	*Arcane Power*
9	Daily	Mirage Arcana	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow™*
9	Daily	Phantasmal Killer	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
9	Daily	Taunting Phantoms	*Arcane Power*
9	Daily	Visions of Ruin	*Arcane Power*
13	Encounter	Illusory Assailant	*Arcane Power*
13	Encounter	Mirror Sphere	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
13	Encounter	Orbmaster's Umbral Assault	*Arcane Power*
15	Daily	Mental Maelstrom	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
15	Daily	Vertigo	*Arcane Power*
17	Encounter	Horrific Shadow	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
17	Encounter	Phantasmal Horror	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
19	Daily	Plague of Illusions	*Arcane Power*
19	Daily	Thought Cage	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
23	Encounter	Deceptive Shadows	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
25	Daily	Phantom Reality	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
27	Encounter	Lost in the Mists	*Arcane Power*
27	Encounter	Phantasmal Dread	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
29	Daily	False Reality	*Heroes of the Fallen Lands*
29	Daily	Visions of Wrath	*Arcane Power*

*This power gains the illusion keyword with this article.

NECROMANCY

Lvl	Type	Spell	Primary Source
1	At-Will	Restless Dead	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
1	At-Will	Rotting Doom	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
1	Encounter	Darkening Flame	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
1	Encounter	Ray of Enfeeblement	*Player's Handbook*
1	Daily	Spirit Rend	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
2	Daily	Lifetaker	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
3	Encounter	Cordon of Bones	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
5	Daily	Grasp of the Grave*	*Dragon* 372
7	Encounter	Ghoul Strike	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
9	Daily	Animate Dead*	*Dragon* 372
9	Daily	Circle of Death	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
13	Encounter	Blackening Pyre	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
15	Daily	Soul Puppets	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
16	Utility	Soul Harvest	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
17	Encounter	Soul Blight	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
19	Daily	Entombing Earth*	*Dragon* 372
23	Encounter	Crushing Necrotism*	*Dragon* 382
23	Encounter	Vampiric Strike	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
25	Daily	Finger of Death	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
25	Daily	Necrotic Web	*Player's Handbook*
27	Encounter	Black Fire	*Player's Handbook*
27	Encounter	Blazing Death Storm	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
27	Encounter	Soul Fire*	*Arcane Power*
29	Daily	Miasma of Enfeeblement*	*Arcane Power*
29	Daily	Moilian Flames	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*

*This power gains the necromancy keyword with this article.

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NETHERMANCY

Lvl	Type	Spell	Primary Source
1	At-Will	Scare	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
1	At-Will	Unraveling Dart	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
1	Encounter	Twilight Falls	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
1	Daily	Ray of Fatigue	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
3	Encounter	Ebony Razors	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
7	Encounter	Murderous Twin	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
9	Daily	Mirage Arcana	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
10	Daily	Wall of Gloom	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
13	Encounter	Dark Gathering	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
15	Daily	Enervation	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
15	Daily	Evard's Dreadful Mist*	*Arcane Power*
17	Encounter	Horrific Shadow	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
19	Daily	Evard's Black Tentacles	*Player's Handbook*
19	Daily	Evard's Ebon Bindings*	*Arcane Power*
22	Daily	Wraithform	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
23	Encounter	Animate Shadows	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
23	Encounter	Orbmaster's Insuperable Lethargy*	*Arcane Power*
25	Daily	Dooming Darkness	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
27	Encounter	Impenetrable Gloom	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*
29	Daily	Energy Drain	*Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*

*This power gains the nethermancy keyword with this article.

TRANSMUTATION

Lvl	Type	Spell	Primary Source
15	Daily	Serpents of Flame*	*Dragon* 388
17	Encounter	Thunderous Transformation*	*Dragon* 382

*This power gains the transmutation keyword with this article.

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Nerathi Legends: Realm of the Gorgon King

By Richard Baker

Illustration by Furman

Cartography by Adam Danger Cook

"Turn aside now, friend. Your path leads to Moghmarrin, where the castles of the fell giants brood amid mists and peaks. Few who venture there ever return."

Beneath the icy rampart of the Nurthedur Mountains lies a kingdom of dread and shadows: Moghmarrin, realm of the fell giants. From their dark castles and strongholds, these terrible creatures rule over a kingdom of brutal monsters and their wretched thralls. Here the western armies of the Empire of Karkoth have their principal armories, forges, and mustering grounds, marshaling hordes of orcs, ogres, and undead to war on the last free peoples of northern Selduria.

Moghmarrin is an ancient land, and the long-lived fell giants have dwelled among these black crags and dreary steppes since the early days of the world. In ages long past they numbered in the thousands and ruled over a vast territory from the shores of the Midnight Sea to the mighty rampart of the Dragonspines. Over the centuries the race dwindled; wars and feuds took their toll on a people whose suspicious nature and avarice already made marriage and family rare. Today Moghmarrin is home to fifteen or twenty fell giant castles and holds, most of which are home to a dozen or fewer of these proud, cruel creatures.

These fell giants make up only a small portion of Moghmarrin's inhabitants and strength. Like the high noble families of a human land, each fell giant clan controls wide holdings and commands the loyalty of hundreds of lesser monsters—trolls, ogres, and tribes of savage orcs. Subjugated long ago when the fell giants were a stronger and more ambitious people, these monstrous vassals remain cowed to this day. Each of these tribes in turn holds as many thralls and captives as it can catch.

The lord of this fearsome land is Taldredar, king of the fell giants. He is known as the Gorgon King because he commands dark and dangerous powers of sorcery, including a poisonous curse with which he petrifies enemies (and minions) that earn his special anger. The courts and ramparts of Gloomfast, Taldredar's seat and stronghold, are liberally decorated with scores of twisted, agonized figures forever imprisoned in stone. Even the mightiest lords

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of Karkoth know to tread carefully in their dealings with Taldredar. The Gorgon King is no mere vassal, but a proud and willful ally who harbors vast ambitions of his own.

Power Structure

Moghmarrin is a monster-haunted land, and until recently none in their right minds ventured into the fell giants' domain. This race of cloud giants has inhabited the mist-wreathed peaks of the Nurthedur Mountains for thousands of years, building great castles and cyclopean ramparts high on the mountainsides. All fell giants hold sway over tribes of lesser monsters and armies of thralls, but the most powerful among them command dreadful necromantic powers and lead clans of their less magical kindred.

Taldredar, the Gorgon King

The sole remaining scion of the ancient line of Moghmarrin's kings, Taldredar is the most powerful sorcerer of his people and has extended his life span for centuries with his dark magic. The giants of Moghmarrin are sullen and unreliable subjects, far more concerned with their personal wealth and power than with serving a king. Consequently, Taldredar rules over his fellows through physical might and force of will; the clan chiefs do his bidding, because they understand that he will destroy them otherwise. To maintain control of Moghmarrin and enforce his will across the realm, Taldredar relies on a personal army of monsters and thralls rather than depending onthe scattered clans of his kin.

The Gorgon King is known for his foul temper. He does not hesitate to destroy any potential rival at the first sign of a challenge, or to slaughter hundreds of minions and thralls in punishment for failure. However, he is quite cunning and rarely allows his temper to lead him into mistakes. The alliance with Karkoth is an example of Taldredar's cleverness: Realizing that if he resisted their overtures, the Karkothi might support rival clan chiefs in their bids to unseat him, he chose to make the Dark Empire's lords his allies. Ultimately, Taldredar intends to use the Karkothi to destroy the most obnoxious clan chiefs and cement his authority among the surviving fell giants. However, the true prize of his alliance with Karkoth is immortality—the enchantments he uses to prolong his life are reaching the end of their efficacy, and Taldredar hopes to wrest the secrets of undeath from the priests of the Chained God in order that he might rule over his realm forever.

The Giant Clans

Taldredar is not the only noble among his people. Each fell giant castle or stronghold is the demesne of a powerful chieftain ruling over a clan of his or her kin, plus the assorted hill giants, ogres, trolls, orcs, and other creatures the clan holds in thrall. The clan chiefs are thoroughly entangled in old rivalries, disputes, and feuds. They fear and hate their neighbors, just as they fear and hate the Gorgon King and his court. Each clan chief acts to guard his or her own wealth and lands, giving little thought to the wider fortunes of Moghmarrin or the demands of the king. They follow Taldredar's orders grudgingly at best, usually doing the minimum necessary to satisfy the Gorgon King's requirements. None of the chiefs are interested in helping the king to assert his authority over any of their fellows—unless doing so provides an opportunity to damage or destroy a rival.

The most important fell giant clans are the Turgravs of Nurthgard, the Gloamgalls of Uld, and the Ludgrums of Ludgrum Keep.

Slevya Durthand, High Marshal of the West

The chief Karkothi general in Moghmarrin, Slevya Durthand is a deadly warrior and a talented warlock who has been appointed by the Chamber of Thrones (the council of Karkoth's kings) to supervise the war in western Selduria. She is a tall, red-haired human of forty years, battle-scarred and as unyielding as a blade of adamantine. Marshal Slevya oversees a dozen or so high-ranking Karkothi officers in command of large military detachments or fortifications, known as war thanes, who in turn command scores of Karkothi darkthanes (see "Nerathi Legends: The Seven Kings of Karkoth," *Dragon* 399) and common officers and administrators of the Karkothi forces in the Gorgon King's realm. The Karkothi police their own holdings, enforce their own laws, and generally attempt to avoid becoming entangled in the feuding between clan chiefs. This situation creates a competing government of sorts within Moghmarrin, provoking resentment from fell giant nobles (and the Gorgon King), who believe that local Karkothi commanders are infringing on the giants' authority.

Slevya splits her time between the mustering grounds of Khethmor and the court of the Gorgon King in Gloomfast. Keeping Taldredar from becoming discontented with the Karkothi alliance is her most important duty.

The Broken Chain

Comprising hundreds of disloyal thralls, exiles, and outlaws scattered across Moghmarrin, the Broken Chain is a secret network of those who work against the fell giants and their Karkothi allies. The Broken Chain works to pass rumors and news from one thrall-pen to the next, shelter those who earn the punishment of their masters, and help thralls who want to escape. Most Broken Chain members are human

or dwarf slaves, but their ranks also include a sizable sprinkling of half-orcs, goblins, orcs, and other creatures held in bondage. Broken Chain cells smuggle those who want to remain out of sight across Moghmarrin, move contraband into (or out of) the Gorgon King's domain, or mount hit-and-run raids and ambushes against outlying areas. No one individual is in charge of the Broken Chain, but a traveling halfling peddler named Jardi Tussockburn secretly serves as a point of contact for important cell leaders. Jardi is usually found in or near Ravenmeet, and he has the means to arrange contact with Broken Chain cells for those who need them.

Exploring Moghmarrin

Moghmarrin is a cold, windswept steppeland or prairie between two great mountain ranges: the tall, icebound Nurthedur Mountains to the north, and the Blackhorn Mountains on the border of Maur Khul to the south. Most of the region is not very suitable for cultivation, so herd-keeping is the primary means of subsistence; flocks of sheep, goats, musk oxen, and more monstrous creatures graze on the open grasslands under the watchful eyes of thralls. In the southerly reaches of Moghmarrin, the pastures and herds are supplemented with fields of rye and other hardy grains.

Wide stretches of the land lie desolate and wild. Escaped thralls sometimes band together into marauding outlaw gangs in these lonely lands, but for the most part the empty lands are given over to savage predatory beasts such as wyverns, yrthaks, and remorhazes.

Gloomfast

The capital of Moghmarrin is the stronghold of Gloomfast:, the seat of King Taldredar, and the mightiest fortress in the land. Taldredar is the chief of the Gorhaugghad clan, the royal family of old Moghmarrin. Only a dozen or so Gorhaugghads still live, all of them grand- or great-nephews and -nieces or distant cousins to Taldredar; the Gorgon King has outlived most of his close kin. The rest of Gloomfast's fell giants are either housecarls sworn to the service of the king or emissaries from lesser clans. Hundreds of warriors of lesser races throng the parapets and guard towers.

Gloomfast is a fortress, but it also serves as the seat of government (such as it is in Moghmarrin), and a small number of free merchants and artisans are allowed to live in its safer districts, catering to those who come to beg an audience before the Gorgon King. The capital is notorious for the scores

GLOOMFAST AT A GLANCE

The Gorgon King's seat is the stronghold of Gloomfast. Few foreign travelers pass under its statue-guarded gates; Khethmor and Ravenmeet are more important for commerce. But Taldredar rarely leaves his capital, and anyone who has business with the Gorgon King (or any fell giants) usually seeks audience here first.

Population Mix: Gloomfast is home to about fifty fell giants, plus close to a thousand lesser giants, monsters, and thralls that serve the Gorgon King. About half of these are orcs and half-orcs. Humans, dwarves, ogres, trolls, and minotaurs are the most common of the remaining inhabitants.

Government: The Gorgon King rules unchallenged here. His will is enforced by his housecarls, fell giant warriors sworn to guard his hall. However, the hidden power of the castle is the seneschal, a human wizard named Vharam. He tends to all the minor details of provisioning, correspondence, and governing that Taldredar does not care to trouble himself with.

Commerce: Gloomfast has little commerce to speak of. Meat, leather, and other goods are produced from the herds tended in the fields beneath the stronghold, but these commodities have little trade value. The Gorgon King and his favorites import a small number of luxury items and foodstuffs from other lands.

Defenses: Gloomfast grew out of a massive hill-fort raised many centuries ago, and over time new rings of walls have been added to replace crumbling old ones. In addition to Taldredar and his formidable guard of fell giants, the stronghold is guarded by close to two hundred hill giants, ogres, and trolls, plus another five hundred or so humanoid warriors. Two dozen trained wyverns protect Gloomfast from aerial assault.

Inns and Taverns: Visitors to Gloomfast are given quarters in the castle, and they dine in Taldredar's hall when the king takes his meals. In addition, a couple of private establishments operate within the walls. The taproom known as the Dragon Tankard, run by a half-orc brewer named Thoskk, is popular with the human-sized guards. The Great Bear Inn is a hostel that has rooms for both human- and giant-sized guests; it caters especially to those who come to Gloomfast uninvited.

of petrified criminals and enemies, victims of the Gorgon King's wrath, that adorn its walls and streets'. Some of these statues are said to be heroes who were trapped by Taldredar's curse, carrying mighty treasures and wondrous items frozen in their unfortunate state.

Khethmor

The major port under Karkothi control on the northern coast of Selduria, Khethmor has been in existence for fewer than ten years. The giants of Moghmarrin have no interest in seafaring or in communications with other lands; when the Karkothi asked Taldredar for permission to construct a base of operations on the shores of the Dragonfirth, the Gorgon King assented with a mere wave of his hand. The Karkothi chose the best harbor they could find within the Gorgon King's domain, then began the construction of their westernmost port. Within the incomplete walls and fortifications of Khethmor lies the military encampment of a Karkothi legion, surrounded by a rough shantytown of merchants, provisioners, and criminals who make their living from the soldiers and workers stationed here. Although the wretched taprooms, squalid gambling dens, and shabby bordellos of Khethmor's alleyways hold little appeal for Karkothi officers, their common soldiers—mercenaries, barbarians, orcs, and worse—throng these places every night.

Ludgrum Keep

Most fell giant strongholds lie in the northern reaches of Moghmarrin among the Nurthedur Mountains, but Ludgrum Keep is an exception. This cyclopean pile of massive walls and brooding towers sprawls over a low hillock in southeast Moghmarrin, commanding a vast swath of the southern steppeland. Clan Ludgrum is relatively weak, with only fifteen fell giants remaining of its once great host, but it commands a vast army of orcs and half-orcs. A century ago Taldredar purged the clan of its rebellious chieftain and most of his close kin—a bloodletting the Ludgrums haven't forgotten— or forgiven. The leader of the clan is the matron Yesvelda, who commands magic almost as potent as Taldredar's sorcery.

Nurthgard

Overlooking an icy vale on the shores of the Dragonfirth, Nurthgard is a gianthold that serves as the home of the Turgravs, the most numerous and strongest giant clan remaining in Moghmarrin. Nurthgard protects western Moghmarrin against attack from the sea, and the clan maintains a strong army of underlings here to guard the giant kingdom's shores. The Turgravs breed white dragons for war, and the frigid

caverns beneath Nurthgard are home to a dozen or more dragons of various ages.

Othor is the leader of the clan. He styles himself the Great Turg, and his clan numbers more than forty. Othor and his kin are therefore the strongest threat to Taldredar's rule. For many decades, the fell giant chieftain has been engaged in a high-stakes game of undermining the Gorgon King and challenging his leadership at every turn, searching for a hint of weakness. Othor is now quite old, and not far from death. Taldredar has simply outlasted him, a realization that infuriates the Great Turg.

Road of Ravens

An old Moghmar road that fell into ruin during the decline of the giants' realm centuries ago, the Road of Ravens has been rebuilt by legions of Karkothi slaves over the last thirty years or so. It now forms a vital artery in the Dark Empire, linking the armories and mustering grounds of Blisterforge with the ice-choked port of Khethmor. The road is named for the menacing flocks of scavenging birds that quickly descend on any beast of burden—or slave—that falls by the wayside on this long, dreary road.

Ravenmeet

A small watchtower marks the meeting of the Road of Ravens and the ancient road leading north to the old capital of Moghmarrin. Here a ramshackle town of barracks and warehouses sprawls among the ruins of giants' halls. The Karkothi maintain a small garrison at Ravenmeet, but this post is held firmly by the Gorgon King's servants. Fell giant captains and their ogre soldiers collect tolls on each caravan that passes through the crossroads, taking the Gorgon King's due in return for the use of the giant kingdom's highways. Several nearby holds within a few miles' walk are home to more giants and their numerous thralls, which till the fields nearby and tend flocks of goats and sheep. The lands around Ravenmeet are barely arable, which makes this region the breadbasket of Moghmarrin, however paltry its yield. Slave-catchers and slave-dealers make a good living in Ravenmeet—for the right price, they'd sell their own kin into thralldom.

Uld

This remote gianthold is home to the Gloamgall clan. Withdrawn and reclusive, even for fell giants, the Gloamgalls have as little to do with their neighbors as possible. Within their fortress walls lies a dark and terrible secret: They have allied themselves with the brutal demon lord Baphomet and his servants, honoring their demonic patron with dark rites and breeding a new generation of demon-blooded bestial giants that revel in slaughter. The Gloamgalls dream of building an army of demonic servants strong enough to overwhelm Gloomfast and the Gorgon King. Whether they can conceal their plans from Taldredar until they are strong enough to strike remains to be seen.

Vale of Dread

Fifty miles east of Gloomfast lies a dark and wild gorge in the Nurthedur Mountains where none willingly venture. This is the Vale of Dread, home to a

ADVENTURES IN MOGHMARRIN

Travelers venturing into Moghmarrin are considered fair game for capture and thralldom by any fell giant or fell giant servant that comes across them, unless the travelers are under the protection of the Gorgon King or the Karkothi thanes posted here. A handful of merchants and artisans enjoy such protection and can move about the realm with care. Travelers can also pass through Moghmarrin with the aid of the Broken Chain, posing as thralls and staying out of the giants' sight.

Here are a few ideas for adventures in the realm of the fell giants.

- **Giants' Treasure:** The heroes must seek out a deserted ruin of ancient Moghmarrin and descend into the dungeons below to recover an artifact hidden in the deepest vaults.
- **Spies:** A Karkothi war thane who carries plans for mounting a new assault on the lands west of Moghmarrin is traveling to the gianthold of Nurthgard to rally the Great Turg and his clan. The heroes must infiltrate the hold and steal the plans for the attack, preferably without revealing to the Karkothi thane that he has been compromised.
- **Freedom:** The heroes must secretly unite the thralls of Moghmarrin against their masters and lead the ensuing revolt. The freedom of thousands of enslaved wretches depends on their success.

ruined city far older than even the crumbling holds of the fell giants. In the days of Moghmarrin's glory, the fell giants fought a war against the city's denizens, a race of flying aberrations that preyed on everything nearby, and laid waste to the foul place. But some of the flying beasts survived in caverns beneath the city's pits and domes, and they still draw travelers that are unfortunate enough to blunder into their reach to a dismal doom.

Fell Giant

Close kin to cloud giants and death giants, the fell giants of Moghmarrin are a proud, domineering people that subjugate lesser giants and humanoid tribes. Huge, strong, and aggressive in battle, they are hardly brutes; fell giant lords command powerful magic, and they are gifted builders and strategists. They usually don well-made armor of iron scales for battle and fight with huge maces and throwing chains: spiked iron balls linked by a short length of chain, perfect for scything down or entangling human-sized targets.

Fell Giant	**Level 20 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (giant)	XP 2,800
HP 191; **Bloodied** 95	**Initiative** +14
AC 36, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 31	**Perception** +13
Speed 8, fly 4 (hover)	Low-light vision
Resist 15 necrotic, 15 thunder	
Traits	
Threatening Reach	
The giant can make opportunity attacks against enemies within 2 squares of it.	
Standard Actions	
Crushing Mace (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +25 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d8 + 5 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Throwing Chain (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +25 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 9 damage, and the target falls prone and is restrained (escape DC 25).	
Mace Sweep (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +23 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d8 + 9 damage, and the giant pushes the target up to 3 squares and knocks it prone.	
Minor Actions	
Dark Mists (zone) ✦ **Encounter**	
Effect: Close burst 3. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the giant's next turn. Squares in the zone are heavily obscured to enemies.	
Skills Intimidate +20	
Str 26 (+18) **Dex** 14 (+12) **Wis** 17 (+13)	
Con 23 (+16) **Int** 17 (+13) **Cha** 20 (+15)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Giant	
Equipment scale armor, iron mace, 2 throwing chains	

About the Author

Richard Baker is an award-winning game designer who has written numerous adventures and sourcebooks, including *Manual of the Planes*™, the *Dark Sun*® *Campaign Setting*, and the *D&D*® *Gamma World*™ *Roleplaying Game*. He's a *New York Times* bestselling author of Forgotten Realms® novels such as *Condemnation*, the *Last Mythal* trilogy, and the *Blades of the Moonsea* series. Rich is currently the Design Manager for the Dungeons & Dragons® game at Wizards of the Coast.

Everything Else I Learned from D&D

By Shelly Mazzanoble

Illustration by William O'Connor

As some of you might know (hi, Mom!), my second book, *Everything I Need to Know I Learned From Dungeons & Dragons*, came out this month. Who comes up with those long titles anyway?

Surprised? What can I say—I'm terrible at self-promotion! While writing a book is a wonderful and joyous experience, it is also freakishly terrifying. Perhaps because there's some level of expectation after writing a first. Or maybe I'm just jaded, cynical, and arrogant now.

So yeah, all those reasons and more might be why I neglected to mention the second book until now. But there you have it: My book baby is out there in the world, and it's time we talked about it. *Everything I Need to Know . . .* was born out of my desire to figure out why a game like D&D has stuck around for as long as it has. Even people who stopped playing never really outgrew it. Sure, I loved the Smurfs when I was little, but I didn't rush out to see the new movie. In fact, I'd rather eat a big, beefy hamburger than sit through two hours of Katy Perry's coquettish interpretation of Smurfette. I didn't solve the mystery completely, but I did figure out that many of life's lessons aren't just found in therapy sessions—they can be learned in your weekly gaming sessions as well. This discovery was much to my mother's dismay (she probably held out hope I'd meet the father of her grandchildren in our doctor's waiting room, but alas . . . I met him in a dungeon.) My mom is a mom. She gives advice—some good, some ridiculous, but nothing that couldn't be contradicted with a 20-sided die. I chronicled my journey of self-discovery through D&D in *Everything*, but I didn't share everything. I needed something for my September column, after all.

Life Lesson #93: Writing a book for the company you work for is weird. And potentially annoying for your coworkers.

I don't just work for my publisher, I work in the very department responsible for the care and feeding of my book baby. I see the budgets, I know the marketing plans, I know what can and can't go in a book contract. Imagine my surprise when a year ago we talked about the big fall 2011 campaign and no one mentioned my book!

"Um, Laura," I said to my boss after the meeting. "Sure Neverwinter is cool and all, and yeah, there's a lot of great products tied to it, but aren't you forgetting something important? Like another product that will be coming out around that time?"

"*Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*?" she asked.

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"No."

"Oh, *Madness at Gardmore Abbey?*"

"Not really."

"*Shadowbane?*"

"OMG, are you being serious?" I shouted. "My book! My book baby will be born in September!"

"Oh, yeah." Her smile was like a virtual pat on the head. "Your book. Did you ever finish writing that thing?"

"Not quite. But it will be ready by the time you finalize that budget."

So yes, writing a book someone wants to publish is amazing. Working for the company that wants to publish it? Borderline schizophrenic.

Sitting in meetings, listening to the various teams talk about how they would promote other people's books, was almost painful.

"Hey," I would say to the PR team. "Know what would be a good fit for the Colbert Show? Me!"

"Oh, ha ha," they laughed. "That would be so cute."

Cute?

Media plans got approved, webpages got built, tweets and Facebook posts shot out around the interwebs. And the whole time I kept thinking, *but what about my book baby?*

"How about a partnership with MAC cosmetics," I said to Laura while we were flipping through a copy of *In Style* at lunch. "Maybe they could design a lipstick shade to coincide with my book's release. Dungeon Diva. Or Roguey Rouge. Or . . . something."

Laura just stared at me. "I'd tell you not to quit your day job, but sadly, this *is* your day job."

"This is *exactly* the kind of book *People* would review!" I said, chasing down the PR manager in the parking lot. "They love fluffy, feel-good memoirs!"

"I'm late picking my kid up from day care," she said. "Get off the hood of my car."

"Well, at least read it," I said, shoving the manuscript through her driver's side window.

Maybe other authors aren't as involved in the publication of their books because they don't spend eight hours a day with the people who create them. I'd walk past the desk of Matt, the art director, and see the book's cover on his screen.

"Do you think my name should be bigger?" I asked.

"Sure," he agreed. "Totally."

When the galley was routed for approval, I saw my name was bigger. And misspelled.

"There's no extra E in Shelly!" I yelled when I saw him working out with his trainer in the gym. "You know that!"

"Oops," he smiled. "My bad."

(Never mind the second galley routed with *Michele* and the third with *Mouthy Mazzanoble*. That'll learn me. Not.)

My poor editor is one of my dearest friends. At least she *was*. Editing this beast nearly sent her into early labor. I'm terrified her son is going to grow up having a nervous twitch whenever I'm around.

And it never helps having a giggling author sitting in the front row when the sales team is presenting the Fall 2011 catalog.

"You forgot a key selling point," I interject. "I've got loads of vacation time and frequent flyer miles. My mom and I are available for tours." (She would probably match the marketing budget dollar for dollar, but I kept that in my back pocket.)

I'm privy to things other authors wouldn't be privy to, such as who is placing orders (thank you!), how the book will be typeset (beautifully!), and why we didn't print advance reading copies (stupid author was LATE!). It's weird and exciting to be so aware of how a Word doc becomes something sitting on a bookstore shelf.

Life Lesson #107: Obsessing over Dungeons & Dragons will make your mom happy.

I first met 12-year-old twins Kenny and Kevin at Barnes & Noble for Nina Hess's *A Practical Guide to Monsters* book signing. In addition to the signing, Nina also had a workshop prepared to teach kids how to design their own monsters. Halfway through the workshop, I saw a flash of yellow between two shelves. That would be Kenny, in his makeshift yellow cape (which doubled as a raincoat), diving into the front row for Nina's workshop like he was sliding into home plate. In the time it took Nina to explain to the other kids what hit points meant, Kenny had already designed six monsters. Turns out he and his twin brother Kevin were huge D&D fans. Like . . . *huge*. They knew things about D&D I'm pretty sure R&D would be hard-pressed to remember. As I learned later from their mother, they both have Asperger syndrome. She brings the twins to the bookstore every week so they can read the D&D books. They devour the information. The stats, the history, the rules. They know the illustrators and artists and game designers and can prattle off lists of their credits on command. They know all this stuff even though they don't own any of the books.

"Occasionally we get books from the library," she said. "They have an amazing ability to memorize everything. They love statistics. They love words. They spend hours talking about this stuff. In a way, it's like their touchstone. D&D keeps them calm."

"Do you know Bruce Cordell?" Kenny asked me when he found out where I worked.

"I do," I told him, feeling remarkably cool by association. "We work in the same office."

"What about Ed Greenwood?"

"I know him, but he doesn't work in our office."

"That's okay," he said after a short pause. "Bruce Cordell is cooler than Ed Greenwood."

When I told Bruce that ringing endorsement, he said he had to meet this kid. Or at least get him to blurb his next book. I arranged a tour of Wizards for them.

When Kenny met Bruce, he stopped and stared at him with a puzzled look on his face. There was a long awkward pause and I thought, *Oh no, he doesn't actually know who Bruce is after all, or he doesn't have a filter and will say something inappropriate like, I thought you'd be taller.* But no. Kenny put his hands in prayer position and bowed down before his favorite writer. "I'm not worthy," he said. "I'm in the presence of greatness."

"Cool," Kevin, the equally enthusiastic but less vociferous twin said, nodding and smiling at Bruce.

Wizards of the Coast fell in love with Kenny and Kevin that day. I mean, how could we not? There they were, debating rules with R&D and composition with the art directors. They were treated like royalty wherever they went. We had to borrow two carts from shipping just to get their loot out to their car.

"You should work here one day," I told the twins.

"Sure," Kenny said. "If we're not rock stars."

Their mom hugged me before she got in the car.

"Thank you," she said with tears in her eyes. "You have no idea what this meant to them."

She was right. None of us did. We sometimes forget the impact D&D has on some people. Almost as big as the impact Jackie and Jesse had on us.

Life Lesson #205: You can take the kid out of the dungeon, but you can't take the grown man out of the dungeon.

I got a lot out of my three years in college when I interned at a "lite" radio station in Ithaca, NY. For one, I learned how to use a mouse. (Hey! Theater majors didn't need computers!) I got a free case of Snapple from the local distributor after he heard the spot I wrote. And I got invited back years (okay, decades) later to their big annual event honoring "the twenty-five outstanding woman in the community."

"Fantastic!" I said to Connie, my former boss. "What number am I?"

"You're not on the list," she took great pleasure in replying. "We want you to come back as our keynote speaker."

"Wow, seriously?"

"Mary McDonnell was our speaker last year," she said. "She's from Ithaca, you know?"

I didn't know, just as I didn't see why both of us potentially shopping at the same grocery store put me in the same league with a real actress.

"Why me?" I mean, I get it's a tough economy but still. The whole "Intern finally gets health insurance eight years after internship ends" might not be a good enough draw for these noted women.

"You graduated from Ithaca College and were our former intern. And you wrote a book and . . . stuff."

"Stuff? You haven't read my book, have you?"

"Well, not all of it," Connie said. She was probably too busy trying to teach a new crop of theater major interns how to use a fax machine.

After Googling "keynote speech" and not coming up with email addresses for high school kids willing to write one for me, I got to work writing my own. I called Connie thirty-one times to make sure she knew my book was about Dungeons & Dragons and that D&D might come up in my speech.

"Is that okay?"

"Yes! Stop calling me!"

"I'm nervous, Connie!"

"Suck it up! See you in April."

Only because I was terrified of Connie did I stop calling and actually showed up in April. I was still rewriting my speech when my parents and I pulled up outside of the lake-view restaurant where the luncheon took place.

"You're making me nervous," Judy, my mom said. "Put your pen down and enjoy your salad."

Right. I was making Judy nervous? She hadn't stopped crying since I told her about the invite.

"My baby!" she was prone to squealing. "I'm so proud of you!"

(She even bought me a dress to wear from the Neiman Marcus outlet in Florida. I love it when my mommy is proud of me.)

When I was introduced, I heard a sob escape from Judy. Her eyes glistened like sequins on a showgirl's cleavage, which is how she earned her nickname, "Judy Wet Eyes." Clutching my index cards, I stared out from the podium at these women who were probably thinking, "Oh, man, we got robbed! The ladies last year got the president of the twelve colonies!"

But I began the tale of my tumble into the world of Dungeon & Dragons. How a nice girl like me ended up romping around dungeons with rogues and fighters and assassins. I explained that yes, people still do play D&D, lots of them. Figuring these fine ladies probably weren't among them, I explained what D&D was.

The more I talked, the more I realized I didn't need those index cards. I was all too familiar with how I got behind his podium, and it had nothing to do with faxing or writing copy.

I waxed on, well over my allotted fifteen-minute window. While they were amused, I could tell these women weren't going to skip the chocolate mousse in favor of running to their local gaming shop to pick up the *Player's Handbook*.

But then I saw him.

He was seated next to his wife, who had her arm around his shoulders. His expression said it all:

Wait. Those are *my* memories!

I swear I could read those old stories like thought bubbles over his head. The time he and his friends invented their own classes—a robot minotaur and an

armadillo skunk rabbit. The all-nighters he spent the summer of '78 trying to finish out that one campaign. The graph paper notebooks filled with sketches of his characters. The quests, the artifacts, the run-in with Demogorgon. Did they even play by the rules? Did it matter?

He was thinking about his buddies—the armadillo skunk rabbit and the cleric who didn't understand the importance of Charisma, and the one with the cool parents who let the boys sleep over, and the cousin who bought him his first D&D "Red Box." Recalling one's first roleplaying encounter is like remembering your first kiss. Good or bad (mine was awful), you never forget.

After my speech, I sat next to Judy Wet Eyes who stared at me like a Labrador stares at a barbecued pig ear.

When the luncheon was over, several outstanding women came over to talk to Judy and me. Judy signed their books.

As much as I wanted to talk to these women, I only had eyes for the smiling gentleman in the audience. When he and his wife made his way to my table, we practically tipped a tray of dirty dessert plates over as we ran toward each other.

"You played D&D!" I yelled at him.

"I was the Dungeon Master!"

"See? I knew it!" I said, pointing to the former Dungeon Master. "This is what I'm talking about. You can leave D&D, but D&D never leaves you."

(And I meant that in a good way, not in a pesky virus sort of way.)

His name was Brian. His outstanding wife, Melissa, was a professor at Cornell University.

"You brought me right back there," he said. "Mark and Steve and Big Jimmy. When we needed a cleric we let Justin play, but we all thought he was weird—a little too sensitive. He would usually flip the table if his character took more than twelve points of damage. But his basement was rad! Stone walls and floors. His parents let us eat and drink down there because there was nothing we could ruin."

His wife was beaming as she listened to him. It was like he was the one being honored.

"I remember these stories," she laughed, "because they came up at our wedding!"

Apparently Mark, Brian, and Big Jimmy were groomsmen.

"No Justin?"

"No," Steve shakes his head spastically. "Not Justin. He moved to North Carolina in the ninth grade. I hear he's an ER doctor now."

Life Lesson #308: There aren't enough pages to capture everything you can learn from D&D.

The D&D mystery won't be solved in one column, or even in one book. There's lots more to discover. Probably enough for a third book. My editor is due back from maternity leave in three weeks, but I guess I'll give her a break. For now.

About the Author:

By the time you read this, **Shelly Mazzanoble** will be in Munich for Oktoberfest. No life lesson there. She just wanted you to know that.

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